

## **Appendix 8 (2)**

**Interview schedule with four principals and focus group interviews with one group of teachers and two groups of pupils (Appendices 3 & 4). Questions and answers given to the ten questions put to principals, teachers and pupils.**

- Q1** (Behaviour Support **Needs** at School-Level)  
(similar to Q2 in Research Proposal and Q6 Principal/Teacher, and Q4 Pupil Questionnaires)
- I:** What help/supports are needed to manage behaviour at school level?
- Principal 1** Well, you need co-operation between staff and parents so that they'll both have a good understanding of what's required, similar values, similar aims in behaviour, similar boundaries between staff and parents and among the staff themselves. Yea?
- Principal 2** I suppose the first thing I would notice or mention is to have a very watertight policy on codes of discipline and approaches towards it and the recording of indisciplines and major indisciplines. Having said that much then, you also need to approach discipline from various angles, there's no point in having a set of sanctions only because from where I stand, a lot of the indiscipline in our school would come from children, their behaviour is driven from something outside of the child, whether it be, just immediately outside of themselves - in the home in their environment or even in their learning environment, that behaviour can be highly driven and we just don't have enough information, that kind of information is not given to enough of teachers, parents, children themselves even that there is a reason for some of the behaviour other than just the person being disciplined, or whatever so I think information should be given to teachers, parents, and to the general educational body around about why behaviours are as they are.
- I** And do you feel that the teachers are trained enough on behaviour?
- Principal 2:** Almost not at all, unless people specifically pick up on summer courses and doing psychology courses and things like that. Teachers aren't aware of it at all. They just have a discipline policy. You tick boxes and the child is either disciplined or indisciplined. There is no step or looking into what drives that behaviour or misbehaviour
- Principal 3** To manage behaviour at school level, I think that it is essential that there would be a whole-school agreement which would involve parents, teachers and children as a tool for managing behaviour or assistance that would be put in place and I think that it is essential that it would be at whole-school level because sometimes different teachers do a lot of wonderful things in each classroom but unless a staff agree together what we, as a group of people feel we need in place in the school for the school to be an effective organisation. Sometimes children go from class to class and different rules apply and there can be some confusion and a lot of information can cause either confusion, frustration, or anger because of different types of management....
- I:** Yes....
- Principal 3:** ....essential that a school would agree exactly what kind of tools they want to put in place.
- Principal 4** Am.....I would say to manage behaviour at school level, am....a whole-school policy on behaviour, number 1 would be imperative. You'd also need....am....to devise a means of approaching parents and calling them in if there was an issue with regard to behaviour in the school. Am...I think that's where a very strong home school link would be imperative, that the home were aware what the acceptable behaviour was at school and they could impart that information onto

their child...in a positive way and.....that's what I feel - a whole school approach and continuity also, between one class and the next - what's accepted in one class or what's unaccepted is the same in the next class.

**I:** Consistency among staff...

**Principal 4:** Consistency among staff in their approach, yea, yea..

**Teachers Focus-Group:**

**T1 (Resource):** Well, school rules are essential. School rules need to be democratically selected when the children come in and I suppose that everybody would be informed about them – parents, pupils. I always think that it is extremely important to teach proper routines around a school, and respect. Also for new staff members, for somebody to go through the school rules because they can be interpreted differently so with new staff, you need to have a run-through on how the rules are actually implemented. We also have a system of people with posts of responsibility take on a pastoral care role and responsible for behaviour within a class groupings so every person with a post of responsibility would be a year head for a different year and then co-ordinate any behaviour difficulties. So that is the first line for the teacher to go to and then if the teacher and the year head couldn't sort it out, then the Principal or the Deputy Principal would sort it out. So that would be the systems that we have.

**T5 (class T):** would that be a big school?

**T1:** Yes, a very big school. We have streams of two and sometimes three.

**T4 (Class):** And when would that happen, between the teacher and year-head, would be after school?

**T1 (R):** Yea, after school, usually. It would be their first port of call for advice and help in dealing with a behaviour issue. That would be the niggling on-going behaviour issues. There are certain behaviours that, straight away, the Principal is involved in, extreme behaviours – we wouldn't have extreme disruptive behaviour really, a major disruptive behaviour in the school but that is one of the systems we have to try and prevent and deal with those behaviours. It's part of our new code of discipline. It really is working very well. We put a lot of work into developing our code of discipline, with parents. It's on-going, it took a lot of work. I think for most schools difficulty arose, when it came down to, like the positive element, everything was about the positive element, but when something happened and something had to be done about it, that's the sticking point in every code of discipline, having a workable solution.

**T2 (Resource):** It's about prevention.

**T1 (R):** Yes, prevention is the main aim of it. Sanctions are the difficult bit. We had the problem that children did something and sanctions were given out. Parents came in giving out about the sanctions. But we said, listen, we sent you home this code of discipline, you signed it, you agreed to it. When it's signed, it makes it a lot easier for you to do what you have to do.

**T6 (6<sup>th</sup> class T):** I think what is significant is that all the children understand that they can be corrected by all the teachers. Sometimes they think that they can be corrected only by their own teacher and I think that has to be

- put in the code of behaviour I think and if they accept that and if a child of mine offends another teacher, I take it as if I have been offended. I deal with it in that manner. I think that is very significant.
- T2 (R): The flip side of that is that you get other teachers who get insulted almost that somebody else is telling off their child.
- T6 (6<sup>th</sup> Class): That's right.
- T2 (R): so you need to be aware of that. I went on a school trip yesterday and I got the feeling that some teachers weren't happy that I was instructing their children about what to do, so I think you have to work on that.
- T6 (6<sup>th</sup> Class): I think that it is the Resource teachers that children think they have no authority.
- T1 (R): Sometimes with younger teacher, you know older children think they can pull one over on them. I think collective responsibility, that has to come from the top. In order to foster that, we do what we call rules mornings and everybody takes a different class, so we have a rota, so maybe I go to Junior Infants today. Say every month, we do two mornings. Different teachers than the class teacher goes into the class and we have a script, say this month, we are working on say: manners and going in and out of the school gate and we do it from 20 past 9 to ½ 9 to try and get that message across. We are all working, all the teachers are working on the same rules. It doesn't always work out that way, say parents let children away with things, some teachers tend to let children away with things.
- T2: Yea, lack of consistency.
- T1: Yea, I think in any human situation, you are going to get that – lack of consistency. People tend to see things differently you know.
- T6: I think that it is the little things that eventually break down. If you correct the little things, you are ½ way there. Begin as you mean to go on.
- T4: I think for yourself as well that other teachers would pick up on the kids who are misbehaving. Sometimes you seem to be the one who is always correcting. It would be good if there was another teacher.
- T1: I think that you notice it very much when people are doing yard duty. Some teachers are out there correcting. Other teachers just stand there with their arms folded and don't get involved. Teachers have to be constantly, teachers have to be constantly reminded that all teachers are responsible for all behaviours.
- I: Actually that came up in the children's focus-groups about behaviour. They said that the older teachers always correct them and the younger teachers tend not to and they say, we'll get you the next time.
- T2: What you need is consistency. You need a behaviour management group as such. In a school I worked in, we had a whole-school behaviour policy and all teachers were talking from the same page. All kids knew the rules and what the consequences would be. It worked so well, partly because of the head teacher. When she left the next head carried it on.
- T1: When I worked in Dublin, we used discipline for Learning. I mean it's mostly used in schools where there would be major problems, mainly disadvantaged areas. It's very time consuming to maintain. In the school where I worked there was a person whose post of responsibility

was Discipline for Learning so every week, you got your sheet to nominate your child who would receive a reward. Detention was part of it, you know that the children would receive detention and the Principal had to oversee that detention. It was very strict. No other system of punishments were allowed. Children had books, they got little cards that they got stamps on for prizes and that. You had to use it exclusively. It was used extensively in schools in Tallaght.

**T5:** We use it in our school now. Actually it's working really well. But you are rewarding kids that are always going to be good. You ask why are the kids being good, are they doing it for themselves, I mean altruism or is it for the stamp. But it does work as well. It's a nice way of being consistent. It work all the way from Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> class but it does take a lot of time.

**T1:** It demands really really constant work. It was devised for schools where there are particular behaviour problems. At the time, the learning wasn't happening because of the discipline problems. But it has stood the test of time. I mean that's nearly 30 years ago now that it was devised. But as you say, it does take up a lot of time, you have to say - do you need it? In our school, we don't need that level of constant support, you would need it if it was impacting on the learning in the school. It is only the odd child, that would be, you know..... There is a lot of work with it, yea, stamps pile up and you might have 3 or 4 days stamps to do. It works but everybody has to be on the same page. There's staff training for it, you know in Dublin. Staff were trained in the system and it was operated very rigidly. I did see when I visited the school in \_\_\_\_ and it is still operating there.

### **Pupils Focus-Group 1**

#### **Q1 (Behaviour support Needs at School Level)**

**Interviewer:** If you were the Principal, what do you think is needed in the school to make sure everyone behaves well?

**Pupil 1:** School Rules are enforced and are put into practice

**Pupil 2:** It would probably help if all classrooms had their own school rules, like each pupil made up a classroom rule, about 5 of them, and then that would probably help better to keep all the rules intact.

**Pupil 3:** If there are like, children behaving, and the principal is up to his eyes with work and he's getting sent children down to him all the time for misbehaviour and the teacher can't deal with him, try and get someone in to help the teachers deal with behaviour.

**Interviewer:** We are talking now about rules for the whole school:

**Pupil 4:** More discipline and punishments.

**Pupil 5:** Maybe if the parents at home encouraged good behaviour.

**Pupil 1:** Maybe if 6<sup>th</sup> class acts as prefects and stopped all the bullying and that.

**Interviewer:** OK, to be on the watch-out.  
How could the teachers help?

**Pupil 4:** Maybe if there were more teachers, like on yard duty, if there were two teachers and even if they were on one side of the yard, they can't be looking over.

**Pupil 1:** Or even if there were 2, they always walk together, and maybe if they were like that (showed them opposite and going clockwise), walking around the school separately, it would be better.

**Pupil 3:** Maybe if the principal employed a counsellor to help the children with behaviour problems.

### **Pupils Focus-Group 2**

**Pupil 1(b):** I think we should be rewarded more because we get in trouble for a lot more things than we do. If we were rewarded, we wouldn't get in as much trouble.

**I:** So more rewards, you think.

**Pupil 2: (b)** We should have more leeway. People get in trouble because they want to get in trouble because it's risky. They wouldn't be cheeky or go out in the yard if they didn't think they'd get in trouble for it.

**Pupil3: (b)** There needs to be stricter rules and punishments. People get in trouble and they don't really care. If there were stricter rules, and stricter punishments, they'd stop, sooner.

**I:** OK, so we said stricter rules, rewards, and punishments and you said something...

**Pupil 2:** More leeway.

**I:** So you said stricter rules and you said more leeway.. ha, ha.

**I:** Why do you think you need more leeway?

**Pupil 2:** Because, when you get in trouble you hardly ever get in trouble. Well if you go to the yard, people wouldn't go to the yard if they get in trouble. Some people want to go to the yard if they get in trouble. They think they are funny and want to get in trouble. If you didn't want to get in trouble for going to the yard, nobody would do it.

**I** So you said, going in the yard, is it?

**Pupil2:** If you don't go near the oil tank...

**I:** If you don't go near the oil tank? Oh, I see, so there's a certain part of the yard that you are not allowed go to, is it?

**Pupil2:** Yea, but everybody still goes.

**I:** And why would they go when they are not supposed to go, do you think?

**Pupil2:** To get in trouble.

**I:** And do they mean to get in trouble?

**Pupil2:** Yea, some of them do to try and be cool.

**I:** Oh, I see, yea. So you think people go over there to get in trouble because it's cool. Is that what you are saying?

**Pupil2:** Yea.

**I:** Would you all agree with that?

**Pupils together:**Yea

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1 **Q2** (Behaviour Support **Needs** at **Classroom/Group** Level)  
2 (similar to Q2 in Research Proposal and Q13 Principal/Teacher, and  
3 Q11 Pupil Questionnaires)  
4 **I:** What help would support **teachers** in the classroom to manage  
5 behaviour so that the teacher can carry on teaching  
6 **Pr 1:** Well, I know in schools where there is serious misbehaviour, they have  
7 a Support teacher and I know that works well in Secondary Schools.  
8 Some schools don't need that though and misbehaviour is easily dealt  
9 with and it doesn't distract the class too much. It could be a learning  
10 process for the child who is misbehaving and for the other pupils. You  
11 don't have to eliminate the child who is misbehaving, you can use it as  
12 a learning process.  
13 **I:** And when you say the support teacher, do you the Learning Support  
14 teacher?  
15 **Pr1:** No, no. There's a specific job, a Support Teacher for behaviour.  
16 **I:** Oh, right.  
17 **Pr1:** Yea, some schools have that. You know that, do you?  
18 **I:** Well, yes, I know they have it in the North but I didn't know there is  
19 such a job here.  
20 **Pr1:** Oh, yea, there is such a job in \_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_ Primary School, and  
21 children are withdrawn from the class because of their behaviour.  
22 They need it in some schools especially in Urban and disadvantaged  
23 schools. Every school should have a Support Teacher. They call them  
24 support Teachers, they're not Learning Support or Language Support,  
25 they're just called Support, but they are Behaviour Support teachers.  
26 **P2**  
27 I think an understanding - same as the first one, an understanding of  
28 the behaviour itself would be the first great help and then working  
29 along and having some way of recording it, and building a body of  
30 information about this behaviour and if it were possible at all then that  
31 some outside agency could deal with the reasons for the behaviour  
32 because certain children suffer an awful lot. Their suffering is  
33 manifested further then in certain misbehaviours and they are punished  
34 further for suffering and there is a kind of circularity going on there  
35 which drives misbehaviour inside their own environment and that is  
36 being caused by something else besides themselves, so I don't know  
37 how to intervene there. I think again it's all around information and  
38 taking up some sort of course that would assist us to intervene and  
39 counsel children setting up some kind of system, to intervene and help  
40 children in some way and help the children and help the people who  
41 work with them as well to understand.  
42 **I:** You mentioned outside agencies, you mentioned counselling.....  
43 **Pr2:** Well, I think.....well, it could be from inside school but it would be  
44 better if it were people from outside if they could come in and interpret  
45 this behaviour and give us a plan to deal with it, whether it is behaviour  
46 modification programmes or behaviour analysis to understand it ,  
47 modification to change it and also behaviour support. Most children  
48 would try to be good but they need support in being good. They are  
49 coming from a different background.

50 **P3** Essential I think that every class would have a list of class rules and  
51 essential I think that they would be drawn up in conjunction with the  
52 children and that people would.....children would understand that  
53 this is the reason that rules are in place, it's for the protection and the  
54 welfare of everybody and not just for the teachers or the Principal but  
55 that it's so that the school can be an effective organisation as I was  
56 saying already. And I think essential to that, is when the rules are  
57 drawn up, and posted in the room, that every day, the attention of the  
58 children would be brought to them, because I think that we do  
59 wonderful work and sometimes set it up and then forget about it but  
60 that the discipline and the programme would be part of school life -  
61 everyday school life, the same as coming in in your uniform or having  
62 your homework done, that this is the way we operate in the classroom  
63 in this school.

64 **Pr4** Within the class.....yes.....to establish classroom rules....the ground  
65 rules are established from the very early stages and then  
66 continuity...that there's no lacking in that, that the children are very  
67 very aware of their limits and the limitations...am.. and then a reward  
68 system as well, I mean ....that the rules are kept and the teacher could  
69 on a particular day acknowledge that reward...for commitment to the  
70 school....to the classroom rules. I find, talking to my class, repeatedly,  
71 about the fact that I'm disappointed, I find by telling them that I am  
72 upset....what is happening in the class has really made me feel quite  
73 upset.....it taps into their emotion but it does...am .bring the  
74 behaviour right back to a very basic level of acceptance am -  
75 unacceptance really.

#### 76 **Teachers Focus-Group**

77 **T1** Just like Question 1 there, I think it's important that at the very start of  
78 the year the children and yourself make up the rules and each year, you  
79 have to be consistent yourself, especially with staff. But it is very easy  
80 to feel sorry for somebody and if they do something wrong, that you  
81 don't deal with them in the same way as somebody that usually carries  
82 on like that. And children understand what are the consequences if  
83 they don't behave properly and those consequences must be the same.  
84 I think the teaching of routine is very old fashioned but they have stood  
85 the test of time. If you actually teach children how you want to  
86 manage your classroom because it might be different from the way the  
87 teacher managed it the year before - what happens when the bell rings,  
88 what happens when they get their coat, what happens on a wet day, and  
89 if you teach it and consistently enforce it for the month of September,  
90 the room operates in an organised way. I think though that it has to be  
91 taught, you can't presume that it's going to happen. Each year, it  
92 needs to be taught.

93 **T6:** I think if the carrot is big enough, you won't need a stick at all. If what  
94 they're deprived of is really what they'd like to have, if that is what  
95 you're depriving them of for example fun and games, if that is what  
96 you are depriving them of, that really gets to them.

97 **T1:** They really need to care about it though.

98 **T6:** They really do.



99 **T1:** Some of the teachers in our school, operate, you know, Golden time,  
100 Jenny Moseley Golden Time. You know they lose their minutes of  
101 Golden Time individually you know and they might have lost a 10  
102 minute of a 20 minutes slot so they have to do work when others are  
103 involved in Golden Time. That really gets to them. Some people  
104 operate you know- homework passes and you can get with so many  
105 points and you can redeem it for a homework pass and you can use  
106 your homework pass, you can use it, you know any night. You can  
107 save it up if you want to go somewhere.

108 **I:** That's a good idea.

109 **T2:** We used the same, you know the Jenny Moseley behaviour as well.  
110 We used the yellow card, and red card fairly rigidly. The kids knew  
111 they were getting a warning when the yellow card was placed on their  
112 table. It was almost like a silent warning. You could see with a lot of  
113 them that, like, their shoulders just dropped if you put a yellow card on  
114 the table. Then with the red, their hearts really nearly stopped and for  
115 most kids, that was the view. I remember one time that I had a  
116 boisterous 20 6<sup>th</sup> class. We, myself and the other teacher went through  
117 the behaviour policy with them. We actually taught them the  
118 behaviour policy that other troublesome kids had never actually seen.  
119 We showed them the responsibilities that they had, we showed them  
120 what their sanctions would be, what they would be expected to fill out  
121 and I think that it worked because they knew exactly what was going to  
122 happen. We would question them at the Golden Time, what was going  
123 to happen now and they knew exactly. It was almost like putting them  
124 on a level, like an adult. Like you waste so much time

125 **T1:** the Jenny Moseley thing, that is very silent....you are not like,  
126 interrupting because like, that's the big thing.

127 **T2:** Yea, like you waste so much time. I had a blue one and it had a sad  
128 face on it and it said 'I will speak to you later' on it. You just put it on  
129 the table without kind of saying anything.

### 130 **Pupils' focus-Group 1**

#### 131 **Q2 (Behaviour support Needs at Classroom/Group Level)**

132 **Interviewer:** If you were the **class teacher**, what help would you need from your  
133 pupils and from others on behaviour so that you can carry on teaching?

134 **Pupil 1:** You need other pupils, like, not to encourage them by laughing, saying  
135 well done, that was funny, encouraging them. Saying maybe 'well  
136 done', Don't give them praise, don't notice it, like, just ignore it.

137 **I:** If they misbehave, is it?

138 **Pupil 1:** Yea, or like if they are trying to look for attention, just ignore them.

139 **I:** So if you were the class teacher, what would you need from your  
140 pupils?

141 **Pupil 3:** You'd need respect from your pupils and they should encourage good  
142 behaviour too.

143 **I:** Good

144 **Pupil 3:** And every pupil would participate in all the work, in the games and  
145 everything.

146 **I:** Say that again.

147 **Pupil 3:** It would give the teacher an easier time if every pupil like participated  
148 in like Science, and PE and everything.

149 I: In all the subjects?

150 Pupil 3: Yea.

151 I: Instead of maybe misbehaving, is it?

152 Pupil 6: If the pupils were obedient and paying attention to all the subjects, then  
153 pretty much the school would get on better and the teacher would probably get on a  
154 lot better with the students and probably give them no homework maybe once a  
155 week.

156 Pupils' Focus-Group 2

157 **Pupil 4:** More respect for the teachers

158 **I:** Yes, everybody needs respect.

159 **Pupil 4:** Yea, if a teacher gives respect to you, you should give respect back

160 **Q3** (Behaviour Support **Needs** for Pupils at **Classroom/Group** Level  
161 (similar to Question 2 in Research Proposal but with emphasis on the  
162 pupil in the classroom)  
163 I: What help would support **pupils** in the classroom so that they can  
164 learn?  
165 **Pr1:** Well, as you say, it is a learning thing. They have to be taught the  
166 rules. They have to be explained to, not just at the beginning of the  
167 year but regularly. They have to be helped to understand the rules,  
168 maybe to create the rules for their own class, maybe not for the whole  
169 school, but for their classroom. And when they do misbehave, it has to  
170 be explained how they misbehaved and the consequences. So there has  
171 to be clear understanding and clear communication.  
172 **Pr2** Again, I think a good programme set-up, that they are given a bit of  
173 information about their behaviour, that it can be changed. Behaviour  
174 modification programme can be set up then and run and they have  
175 input into it, particularly over half of the school that the child would  
176 have a say in the plan first of all but in looking back over a week's  
177 behaviour, that they will be able to say why they did this and why they  
178 did that and they get an understanding of their own behaviour because  
179 a lot of the behaviour is totally outside a child's understanding unless  
180 they examine it or analyse it somehow.  
181 I: Do you think that well-planned lessons would come into that?  
182 Pr2: It would, yea. But I was talking of our context here, where you find  
183 that almost all of the misbehaviour has an environmental basis, that  
184 there is something going on in the child's environment whether it is  
185 home issues, monitory issues, people losing work, in the family, illness  
186 in the family, marriage break-downs, things like that, manifesting in  
187 behaviour and the children don't have a clue about what is going on.  
188 Now, a very structured classroom would work alright. Not always.  
189 **Pr3**  
190 I think that the rules would be put into force so that people realise well,  
191 the rule about working quietly at that particular time is for everybody,  
192 it's to allow people to concentrate, it's not to ruin your fun at school,  
193 it's to....that each rule applies to a different stage, and it's there for the  
194 welfare of each child and I think the children would need to be taught  
195 that and particularly children maybe who have difficulty around their  
196 behaviour for whatever reason, maybe because of a named condition or  
197 maybe .....for whatever reason that there is a poor pattern of  
198 behaviour, I think they need to be taught carefully the rules and taught  
199 why they're there and maybe supported in...in establishing those rules,  
200 whether that would be a reward system, and I think the one that works  
201 best is, you know, catching them when they are being good as the old  
202 saying goes.  
203 I: Mm mm, and do you feel that the teacher has input there, you know  
204 for example, well-planned lessons, otherwise the children might get  
205 bored and mightn't behave.....  
206 Pr3: Oh, absolutely, I think, you know, essential for every class teacher to  
207 come in well-prepared because children are very clever at spotting the  
208 day that you're winging it and it makes some children uncomfortable,  
209 it gives other children a reason to....you know, carry on so I think,

210 essential that you come in, you know, ready for the day's work, you  
211 know, a plan for the day and all the things you are going to need to put  
212 that plan in place.

213 **Pr4** Le me see - children - I would say ....I'd say this is where an  
214 individual education plan would come in.... am.....obviously for  
215 academic work also but for behaviour and to pinpoint maybe one  
216 particular behaviour that the child is consistently carrying out in the  
217 room, that is unacceptable and that again, like, a reward system would  
218 be put in place and that his good behaviour would be acknowledged -  
219 so a very targeted approach, to a child, and a meeting with the mum  
220 and to identify what is happening in the class that is upsetting the rule  
221 of things, that is interfering with his learning and perhaps even  
222 distracting others in the class....so a very very targeted approach, a  
223 very clear cut and realistic....a very .realistic set of objectives for each  
224 child.

225 I: And for the pupils, in general, in the classroom, what would they need  
226 so that their teacher can carry on teaching ....you know, rather than the  
227 individual child in the class, the class as a whole, what do they need,  
228 do you feel?

229 Pr: A structured time-table - children love routine ....make it very very  
230 clear to them what is happening - what is happening at 11 o'clock,  
231 what is happening at ½ past 11, and if they're told in advance I feel  
232 .....you know, later on today, we have PE and if there is a shift in the  
233 time table that they are informed .....for some reason, for example if  
234 the halla (hall) is not available or if it's raining outside, well, that that's  
235 explained to them and not just all of a sudden, well, we're not going to  
236 PE.....you know that they are actually informed if there is a change in  
237 the time table..... they need routine and continuity.

238 I: And what should they expect from their class teacher, you know in the  
239 line of lessons?

240 Pr4: Well, differentiation, absolutely, you know, to cater for each person.  
241 We're lucky here in that we have small numbers per room and that's  
242 not to say that we've no issues either but just, you know, by scanning  
243 the room, you can pick out the groups, you can see whose on routine  
244 and who has needs extra support and then you'd always have children  
245 who need to be challenged, who need to be occupied...they have to be  
246 .kept on task. They could be at the opposite end of the scale and that  
247 their needs are also catered for, they are as much in need of an  
248 Education Plan I feel....so they don't get bored and switch off....that  
249 they are constantly challenged.

#### 250 **Teachers focus-Group**

251 T2: I think you need to teach social skills because it is a big, big thing and  
252 it is what children are lacking. From having done critical skills, I don't  
253 know if it is over here but basically I qualified in Jersey. You would  
254 give a group....., there is a lot of group work. It was a project, say the  
255 Vikings as an example and they had to do a poster project between  
256 them and every person had a role, say you were the timekeeper,  
257 another the resource person, you know there was a role for everybody  
258 so they had that sense of responsibility. They had to problem solve  
259 together, they had to discuss, they had to listen, and you had to teach

- 260 all these skills individually beforehand, but, you know, what would  
 261 make a quality project, etc, and you would have all these pinned up on  
 262 the wall before you even started the project so the kids would know  
 263 what we have to do, discuss it and that. You know it takes a good  
 264 month to teach the skills in themselves but once they had the skills, and  
 265 you put a challenge in front of them, they would be able to do the  
 266 challenge. Then you would have a report at the end but they would be  
 267 able to play their role. It just worked really really well.
- 268 T1: The thing that we had like that is co-operative groups, you know that  
 269 girl in Galway that did the work. Everybody gets a card and each  
 270 group has a role and you teach the role very consistently before they do  
 271 the work. It's something like that. I think differentiated work in a  
 272 class also. You know every child purposefully engaged. I think a lot  
 273 of the misbehaviour comes from children who are bored. Some of the  
 274 work put in front of them is either too hard or too easy and they are  
 275 looking for challenge really. I think really proper differentiated work  
 276 adds to.....
- 277 T4: I think with the grouping and co-operative work, it's something that  
 278 has to come up through the school as well because you know at senior  
 279 level, you're trying to introduce it and if they haven't been doing it  
 280 before, so I think like a whole-school programme where everybody is  
 281 doing the same.
- 282 T6: You'll get a particular day when you find that this child just doesn't  
 283 want to do work. On that day, I think that the child has to be  
 284 withdrawn and for a teacher to understand that that facility is there for  
 285 them. I think that's significant as well.
- 286 T1: I think that teachers need to feel supported. I've had a junior infant  
 287 child who had really extreme behaviour. I just couldn't manage her at  
 288 all. She trashed all round her. She ended up having to go to a special  
 289 school for behaviour difficulties. I felt vulnerable really and I'd hate if  
 290 my colleagues had judged me, but I used to say 'Will you please come  
 291 in and help me, this child is really frightening me' or whatever but I  
 292 think the support of your colleagues, you really need to feel supported  
 293 and non-judgemental of your teaching skills or of you management  
 294 skills.
- 295 T4: I feel sometimes when you look for help, especially with senior  
 296 teachers, it's expected that you should be able to get on with it and  
 297 when you go for help sometimes, it's not fair, you do feel on your own.

### **Pupils Focus-Group 1**

#### **Q3 (Behaviour Support Needs of Pupils in the Classroom)**

- 299 I As pupils, what do you need from the teacher and from others so that  
 300 you can learn?  
 301
- 302 Pupil 4: You need a quiet atmosphere, it's hard like and you need the teacher  
 303 not to be interrupted, like when she is interrupted, she loses her train  
 304 of thought and it can make it harder as well.
- 305 I: That's a good idea.
- 306 Pupil 5: respect from your friends and that in the class and them not to be  
 307 interrupting when the teacher is trying to explain something.
- 308 I: Ok, that's good.

309 Pupil 3: Maybe if there is someone misbehaving in the class and you can't get  
310 on with your work, or maybe behind the teacher's back, just tell the  
311 teacher, maybe send them to the corner where they can think about  
312 what they have done wrong, and come back and say sorry.

313 I: Like kind of time-out, you mean?

314 Pupil 3: Like let them think about what they have done wrong.

315 I: Yes, that's good.

316 Pupil 4: Maybe tell someone in the classroom a problem.

317 I: Maybe be able to talk to someone, is it?

318 Pupil 1: Yea, there is something like that in Secondary, yea, like a Year Head,  
319 like 6<sup>th</sup> Year.

320 Pupil 1 If someone is writing on the blackboard, and if someone comes in to  
321 the class and watches the class while he is writing and someone is  
322 talking, he'll get caught easy.

323 **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

324 Pupil 4: More discipline so you could learn more in the classroom.

325 I: So he or she needs to be strict on discipline?

326 Pupil 5: We get away with too much in the classroom.

327 I: Do you? You feel that there should be stricter rules.

328 Pupil 5 Yea, let's say we are doing a test and everyone needs to be quiet so we  
329 can concentrate.....

330 I: Say that again

331 Pupil 5: Say we are doing a test and everyone needs to be quiet and they are all  
332 messin and that.

333 I: Yes, you need quietness for a test. Anything else that you need from  
334 your teacher and from others so that you can learn?

335 Pupil 6: If a child like keeps misbehaving, say you are doing a subject, and they  
336 keep misbehaving, they should be sent to a different room if you start  
337 messin or something.

338 I: Ok,

339 Pupil3: If you are in our class and you get in trouble, you get sent to a black  
340 line.

341 I: You get sent to.....?

342 Pupil 3: A black line.

343 I: A black line on the floor?

344 Pupil3: Yea, which really doesn't do much to stop you.

345 I: Oh, right. I'm just throwing it out there that if you get sent to another  
346 room, is that interfering with another class?

347 Pupil1: Yea, but there's no one to mess with.

348 I: There's no one to mess with, so you think that it's a good idea.

349 Pupil3: Or you could be sent to the staff-room.

350 Pupil 2: But you still have to do your work, you have to bring your work with  
351 you.

352 I: But if you went to the staff-room, who is in the staff-room?

353 Pupil 7: There's always someone in there.

354 Pupil 3: Just say someone got in trouble for talking, they go back and do it  
355 again as soon as the teacher turns around.

356 I: So are you saying that the penalties are not enough?

357 Pupil 3: Yea.

1 **Q4** (Behaviour Support **Needs** at **Individual** Level)

2 I: What help would support **individual** pupils with behavioural  
3 difficulties in school to enable them learn?

4 **Pr1** Well, some children definitely need to be withdrawn for a chat or a bit  
5 of Counselling, listening to them to know what their problems are, and  
6 I think the Learning Support Teachers could work on that and the  
7 Principal teacher if she or he is free, to have individual sessions with  
8 children who continually misbehave.

9 I: Right, OK.

10 **Pr2** I think the individual needs support from the class teacher, from the  
11 Principal, perhaps from an outside agency as well to understand what  
12 they are doing and give them hope that there is a change in their  
13 behaviour. About half of misbehaviours, the ordinary day-to-day  
14 routine ones change immediately but the ongoing ones, the recurring  
15 ones, are the ones that we need to get a hold of some kind of  
16 programmes to work with.

17 I: And the individual pupil, where would they get that help. Would they  
18 get it within the classroom, or would it be outside of the classroom.

19 Pr: I would prefer if they got it in a kind of holistic thing - both inside  
20 classroom, outside classroom, within the school in general, with their  
21 parents, with their home and that is a matter of a lot of information, we  
22 are able to give the home and we are able to give our community a lot  
23 of information about other school issues - the revised curriculum, about  
24 sporting things, just about everything except behaviour and just  
25 castigating children just because they misbehave on a continual basis,  
26 and without having the full information and the knowledge about how  
27 behaviour is driven. I think it is unfair both to the school and to the  
28 child. So I would think an information dissemination would be very  
29 very important, why behaviour show themselves the way they are.

30 **Pr3**

31 I think they would need to work with their resource teacher or learning  
32 support teacher to actually first of all understand the rules and the  
33 reasons for them and then if the child has difficulty around it, maybe  
34 tailoring the school programme but keeping it very much as part of a  
35 school programme that they wouldn't be a separate programme for  
36 them but a tailored programme built around the existing programme,  
37 otherwise you might be setting them apart and I think they feel  
38 themselves that if they are set apart that they are different so it  
39 establishes well, maybe that they don't really need to behave as well as  
40 others so as far as they are capable of behaving, we have to support  
41 them and demand that they do.

42 **Pr4**

43 Yes, highlighting the particular behaviour. I suppose, Kay we  
44 have to go back to the root also, there could be an underlying issue that  
45 may not present itself verbally from the child, why he's upset or acting  
46 out - that's where the home-school link is important. In a case here,  
47 where the child had a particular health complaint and as a result, it was  
48 stressful on him and by talking with mum, we established what was the  
49 root of it and we are aware now of this particular issue which is  
50 stressful and it definitely is the root of all his anger, his aggression, his

51 defiance, we can put it all right back to this particular condition that he  
52 has and by talking about it I'm sure his parents are aware of it at  
53 home but in school....he can now leave the room ....to use the  
54 bathroom, we say 'don't worry if you have to leave the room'. He  
55 has come on in leaps and bounds. We had a visitor to the school  
56 recently and he personally thanked me for organising the visit and that  
57 wouldn't have been the same child a few months ago. So I think....  
58 am...children, I don't feel they are not born with this behaviour but  
59 they don't learn this aggression, you know what I mean, I don't think  
60 it's fair to say 'Oh, he's like that and there's no reason for it and we'll  
61 move on and try and cope' but well do everything we can and go right  
62 back to the issue and in so doing, the child has the opportunity to  
63 perform and achieve on the same level as everybody else and not to be  
64 a target for this negative behaviour.

65 I: Yes, and what do you put in place for that individual child with  
66 behavioural difficulties?...What supports are in place for a child with  
67 behaviour problems?...

68 Pr: We have a particular programme operating here...the name of the  
69 programme escapes me but it's where the child fills out what he's good  
70 at...

71 I: Oh, yes, strengths and needs.

72 Pr: Yes, strengths and weaknesses. This is the child's opportunity to focus  
73 on his positives.

74 I: Does he go out separately with another teacher or does he do it as part  
75 of his class work?

76 Pr: Am...

77 I: What steps are there for a child like that?

78 Pr: This child that I am thinking of doesn't leave the class but there are  
79 other children in the school that have to leave the room, yes.

80 I: And who would they go out to?

81 Pr: Another teacher, sometimes the secretary might just speak to him.  
82 Sometimes, he just needs some quiet time away from the class, he just  
83 needs to be out of the classroom situation. And it's difficult because  
84 you can't always provide that, and we're lucky because we have the  
85 School Completion Programme here as well and we have a project  
86 worker and where children have missed out, the project worker can  
87 step in and take the child one-to-one, obviously with the consent for  
88 the parents, and build confidence and address key learning issues that  
89 he's missed in the time he's been away.

90 I: What is the School Completion Programme?

91 Pr: School Completion is a targeted approach to children who would be  
92 considered at risk of not competing secondary school....

93 I: Although this is primary school....

94 Pr: Yes, they target the primary level....

95 I: From about what age?

96 Pr: We are currently working with a boy in Junior Infants who is working  
97 with the project worker, employed under School Completion. He  
98 missed a significant number of days, and there were concerns over his  
99 home environment as well, his confidence is very very low and he is  
100 quite aggressive in himself also. With regard to School Completion,



101 then, that facilitates that child, the fact that he's out of synch in the  
102 class, he's missed so much, so this is his opportunity to  
103 shine....am....he's given his one-to-one, whatever the timetable  
104 allows.

105 I: Is that teacher here every day?

106 Pr: She's not a teacher, she's a project worker. She's here 15 hrs. a week.

107 I: Like a carer, is it? What qualification has she?

108 Pr: She's a Special Needs Assistant, a Classroom Assistant.... is her  
109 background.

110 I: Oh....yes.

111 Pr: Well, on the School Completion then and the fact that attendance is  
112 monitored ....she would be monitoring attendance in a way of  
113 informing who her next client/child would be. We have an after school  
114 club as well and she is involved in that.

115 I: that's good, everyday is it?

116 Pr: Well, she's here Monday to Friday but no, after school club ....the girls  
117 come down from the girls' school every Tuesday and there's cooking,  
118 there's games, sewing, crafts, different times, different times, it  
119 depends on what's available.

120 I: And is there after school club for boys as well?

121 Pr: Well, this is our school and the girls come down to us.

122 I: And the boys do it too.

123 Pr: Yes, the boys do it as well, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> class, and next year I'm  
124 hoping that we'll have a computer club here on a Wednesday. My  
125 background is IT, I'm completing a Master's in IT. So what I'm  
126 hoping to do is use IT as a means of, just attracting children who might  
127 not engage as well in a classroom and in my research, I've discovered  
128 that IT is an outlet, a literacy that they might engage in a bit  
129 more.....and to support their learning in the classroom as well. I have  
130 a few ideas that I have put together,.... am....school web site,  
131 uploading our pod cast or our blogs which is uploading documentation  
132 that they have done per day....am....small groups,....group  
133 activity,....and when I mentioned School Completion, we will be  
134 targeting the children that we would like to involve, it will be open to  
135 everybody but we will ensure that Johnny and Frank, that they would  
136 definitely benefit from it and we would contact parents and parents  
137 would be involved and they would be reminded of the benefits of it.

138 I: And is that every week?

139 Pr: My hope is that we will have the 'computer club every Wednesday and  
140 it will be suitable for the boys here.

141 I: Or girls?

142 Pr: Well, I suppose my preference is that I would just have it for the boys  
143 here on a Wednesday because they will have the opportunity for them  
144 to mix with the girls on a Tuesday. So Wednesday will be just the  
145 computer club.

146 I: And on the Tuesday, you mentioned that there's crafts and cookery, is  
147 that for boys and girls?

148 Pr: Yes.

149 I: and do you find that the boys take on those topics?

150 Pr: Yes, and when I've gone down there, I have observed some of our  
151 boys from 4<sup>th</sup> class and they were all given a plain pillow cushion and  
152 some embroidery thread, and they decided to do maybe the first initial  
153 of their name, some did flags, more did the colour of their jerseys- their  
154 favourite football team etc. And I've noticed obviously the girls were  
155 concentrating a bit more but the boys were trying to get the hang of it  
156 as well so I sat with some of the boys and I put dots on the pillow  
157 cushions - I gave them a little guide. Yea, yea, there was cookery as  
158 well and the boys would engage in the cookery also.

### 159 **Teachers Focus-Group**

160 (Behaviour Support **Needs** at **Individual** Level)

161 I: We'll look now at behaviour support needs at Individual level:  
162 What help would support **individual** pupils with behavioural  
163 difficulties in school to enable them learn?

164 T1: I suppose analysis of the behaviour difficulties - an assessment of why,  
165 you know, are there behaviour difficulties or.....Most behaviour  
166 difficulties are driven by a need.....All behaviour I suppose is driven  
167 by a need.....Well, constructive behaviours in general and then there  
168 are problems, something within the child like ADHD, Asperger's or  
169 that, and which need outside professional help or maybe environmental  
170 issues, something gone wrong at home or something gone wrong in the  
171 child's environment so I feel that it is one of the biggest needs we have  
172 is an understanding of the child's behaviour and what's causing it. I  
173 think that if we kind of know whether the child can't really control  
174 because of maybe a brain dysfunction or a neurological difficulty like  
175 ADHD. The only thing is we would deal with it differently if we have  
176 the background knowledge about environmental issues, say disruption  
177 in the family or a death or even, you know some sort of a dispute in the  
178 home, then we are able to look at it differently. We might still follow  
179 the same procedures for dealing with it but we may also be able to  
180 access help from outside for dealing with it.

181 T5: You know you said about analysing their behaviour, it could be the  
182 time of the day, they could be fine in the morning and then in the  
183 afternoon, they just go .....mad. At the start, earlier, you were talking  
184 about when are they going to go out for resource, when are they going  
185 to go out for.....well, you need to take them out for those times, they  
186 are not able to be in the classroom. If they are going to go out, I  
187 suppose it is important to analyse it beforehand.

188 T6: I think there are some dysfunctions that you can't remediate at all.  
189 There are children who are coming from very troubled backgrounds,  
190 they're not responding to anything.

191 T2: I think you need to have a very good relationship with the parents, you  
192 know as far as you can to work together on it. Children think they can  
193 get away with it, in certain environments. Consistency again across the  
194 different divides need to be maintained as well. Sometimes all you  
195 need is a quick phone call home.

196 T6: But sometimes the parents are in open conflict and it is the staff at the  
197 school that they are in open conflict with.

198 T1: I think sometimes if you have an SNA (*Special Needs Assistant*),  
199 sometimes children have to be removed, children with severe

behaviour difficulties but to let other children in the class learn and not be intimidated by them. Sometimes there has to be someone there to take the child from the class, either the Principal or the SNA, or somebody, you know to bring them out to the school garden and letting them dig. We also have a sensory room where we take them if they really need to calm down.

T6: We had an interesting one in our school lately. One teacher was recently doing her Diploma and the Inspector requested that two children be removed from the classroom because they were disruptive. The inspector said that the teacher couldn't perform her duty and couldn't qualify herself with the presence of the two children. Of course, the children are back in the classroom today, and yesterday and will be again next week. You don't always have the convenience of doing that some days, we don't all have back gardens and that.

T2: We did have a Support person in one school that I worked in, and her timetable was set up so on a specific day, and time, she would go to specific classes and take a group, you know a mixture of all the classes and she would do an activity with them, some type of behaviour-related self-esteem kind of work, but then you know, in some ways, the kids thought that that was a reward as well for misbehaviour in class, you know, they were going to get their treat at the end of the day. And then the other kids see them taken away and say 'that's not fair, they are getting rewarded'.

### **Pupils Focus-Group 1**

#### **Q4 (Behaviour Support Needs at Individual Level)**

I: And what help does a pupil who is inclined to misbehave need so that they can learn?

Pupil 6: A counsellor.

Pupil 3: Maybe if don't get enough attention off the teacher, they feel that they are not getting enough attention, and while we are all working, the teacher could go over and have a chat with them and ask them what is going on.

Pupil 2: Maybe if the Principal informs the parents, the parents should encourage good behaviour at home.

I: Good idea, ah, hum.

Pupil 6: Pupils who misbehave, they do it for attention, they crave that. Maybe they need one-to-one time so that they get their full attention. If they get attention at home, they wouldn't be craving it so much in class.

I: Ok, so you are saying give attention to them, one-to-one.

Pupil 6: Yea.

I: And who would give them that attention, would the class teacher have time or should it be someone else?

P3: The class teacher doesn't really have time.

Pupils Together: There should be someone special, someone else.

Pupil 5: A counsellor.

I: We don't really have Counsellors in Primary schools.

Pupil 1: Well, someone who is well experienced. Maybe someone else.

P5: Someone that deals with behaviour.

Pupil 1: Or maybe someone with a degree

P3: Or maybe a psychologist.

250 I: So a psychologist could help in that way?  
 251 Pupils Together: Yea,  
 252 Pupil 4: Or maybe someone coming in once or twice a week.  
 253 I: So somebody besides the class teacher?  
 254 Pupils Together: Yea.  
 255 I: Could it be the class teacher?  
 256 Pupil 3: Well, it could be but it could make things awkward, like they would be  
 257 giving out to them in the middle of the class.  
 258 I: So you are saying that pupil needs attention from someone besides the  
 259 class teacher.  
 260 P3: Yes, he or she could step out of class and the other person talks to  
 261 them.

## **Pupils'Focus-Group 2**

263 Pupil 7: well, if they are really in trouble, for doing all the stuff they do, they  
 264 should have someone to help them calm down and all and go off on  
 265 their own. They should still be doing the work that they should be  
 266 doing. But like,..... they should be getting help for getting in trouble  
 267 but then, they shouldn't be getting in trouble either.  
 268 I: And who would give them the help?  
 269 Pupil7: I don't know, maybe someone like a helper or a teacher or something.  
 270 I: And when you say teacher, do you mean somebody like a class  
 271 teacher, or somebody outside of the class.  
 272 Pupil7: Somebody outside the class because the teacher has the rest of the class  
 273 to be getting on with.  
 274 I: Alright, and can you think of anybody who could help outside of the  
 275 class?  
 276 Pupil 5: A counsellor.  
 277 I: A counsellor if you had a counsellor so you would have to bring in a  
 278 counsellor. Anyone else?  
 279 Pupil 8: The Principal, the boy's Principal could ....help the children that  
 280 misbehave an awful lot.  
 281 I: Ok, and how could they help do you think?  
 282 Pupil 6 Tell them like that they can't keep doing it or they'll get in serious  
 283 trouble when they are older.  
 284 I: So you mean have a chat with them.  
 285 Pupil 6: Yea.

1 **Q5** (What is needed most according to Principals, Teachers and Pupils

2 **I:** Results from the questionnaires in Phase 1 showed that  
3 **Principals** said what was needed most in school was  
4 Consistency among teachers, and Behaviour Training for teachers.  
5 **Teachers** said what was needed most in school was:  
6 Consistency among teachers. However,  
7 **Pupils** said the most important thing was:  
8 **Respect.** What do you think of these comments and what are your  
9 thoughts?

10 **Pr1:** Well, I would agree with all three. **Respect** as the pupils say is  
11 important. Teachers have to respect the pupils and sometimes teachers  
12 have to earn respect. They can't just control the class just because they  
13 are the teacher. They earn children's respect and they earn children's  
14 respect by giving the children respect. So the children are correct in  
15 saying that.  
16 The teachers are correct in saying **Consistency** among teachers.  
17 Teachers' hate getting a class from a teacher who has been completely  
18 different in their behaviour difficulties and how they treat them in their  
19 classroom management difficulties. Of course, we are not all the same.  
20 We are all different with our own idiosyncrasies but there has to be a  
21 school consistency, among rules and such and for that to happen, the  
22 Principal I suppose there has to be a bit of training for teachers. So all  
23 three are correct.

24 **Pr2**

25 **Pr:** Well, I think the **behaviour training** would be higher for me. I  
26 would find that we have probably a lot of consistency in that we have a  
27 code of discipline and indisciplines are recorded and then as they  
28 accumulate, we get a look at why, to try and find an underlying reason  
29 for indiscipline. I think that behaviour training, our understanding  
30 would be very important. Consistency always works of course for the  
31 less significant indisciplines. Consistency would work well there but  
32 what I am talking about is persistent misbehaviour and problems.

33 **I:** OK

34 **I:** Pupils said what was important to them was respect. Would you agree  
35 with that?

36 **Pr:** I would, yea. It's very important that all people involved in the  
37 Education system have respect, for the children themselves, for their  
38 families, for their parents, and a teacher not respecting a pupil, or their  
39 family would have serious consequences. Now respect goes the other  
40 way as well. A family must have respect for the Educational system,  
41 for the school, and the management system in the school, respect for  
42 the policies of the school, first and foremost. I mean people will get  
43 into difficulties but at the same time people ought to have respect for  
44 the policies of the school and try and work around the issues, through  
45 the policy systems.

46 **I:** Yes. You mentioned there the Code of Discipline. Would you like to  
47 tell me more about that?

48 **Pr:** Well, I suppose every school will have a Code of Discipline. It's a  
49 matter of laying down a set of expectations, a set of positive behaviour

initiatives to drive on positive behaviour. At the same time, there are going to be times when there are children misbehaving, there has to be some set of sanctions, some protections for maybe other people. Then again, you might have more serious issues like bullying in school and a school would have an anti-bullying policy, to approach complaints of bullying, a recording system first of all, some way of intervening and the reasons for bullying.

I: The Code of Discipline - would parents get it when they first come to the school?

Pr: They would get it. It would be published. In our case, it is published on the school's website. Most parents would have access to the Internet.

**Pr3**

Pr: Well, my experiences would be that, yea, consistency is vital and I would have noted, you know, where we have changes in staff, maybe, for whatever reasons, you know, unless the system is brought to the attention of the new teacher and absolutely gone through with her or him, that it can go awry, and once the inconsistency....., the plan becomes less and less effective and all you need is for one class not to be on board, I think that it is absolutely essential that everybody is on board and because they're on board and have agreed the set of rules, that the rules are then kept so you have more cooperation from parents, from teachers.

I would agree with that about the respect and I think that's the reason why children need to be part of the setting up of the system. They need to....you know,....in as far as is possible, they need to be part of the agreement about what rule, ....rules are important in a school and why we have them, you know that there are rules everywhere, you know as part of a society, we have to keep a certain number of rules for our safety and for that of others. I think if they're brought on board, when a rule is broken, they're more inclined to cooperate with a sanction that's put in place, ah....and inclined to feel pride when they're rewarded because they have been part of the process and the setting up.

I; So you're saying that they are going to buy more into it because they have been part of .....

Pr: Absolutely, and I would find as well with parents, .....we have set up a programme here and we called the parents in and talked to them about it and .....even though there were some teething problems about people signing up to it, once people signed up to it and realised well, this is what's in place, you know, .....I will know if my child has a sanction, the reason for it, how it came about, so they tend to buy into it more.

**Pr4**

Pr: Oh, I definitely agree with that, absolutely, consistency among teachers. Behaviour training - I suppose that's no harm either, for newly qualified teachers, that they would be given some training and the implementation of a school policy, whether it would involve role play or a course where they would have to physically act out the policy

99 as opposed to a policy that up on the shelf. If they were engaged in a  
100 workshop that would allow them to demonstrate the effects of policy.

101 I: And do you feel that there is a need for behaviour training for teachers  
102 who have been teaching for years, you know like, in-service for those  
103 teachers?

104 Pr: Well, if I observe our setting here, we're a relatively young staff. Now  
105 one of our teachers have 30 years' experience, teaching in an all-boys  
106 school so I don't fear for him, that behaviour training would be an  
107 issue and in fact, he'd be the one who would be able to give the  
108 behaviour training if you get my meaning. He's just perfected the art of  
109 establishing respect in his class. It's definitely a parallel, he is  
110 respecting them and equally he is getting respect.

111 I: But is he getting respect because he is male?

112 Pr: I feel he is.

113 I: Gender come in to it.

114 Pr: Yes, it does.

115 I: And as you were saying, 30 years' experience as well.

116 Pr: Yes, the experience as well. Well, as principal now, I would threaten  
117 if this continues, you will have to spend lunchtime in the male  
118 teacher's room and there is a fear there.

119 I: It's funny that you should say that but as part of my project here, I've  
120 gone to two all-male schools, all boys schools and in both cases, the  
121 principal was female and there was only one male teacher in the school  
122 and both said the same thing - that children are sent to the male teacher  
123 in the school for their behaviour.

124 Pr: And I don't see it as a shortfall but there is just something there. I  
125 remember when I was young as well, my mother used to say to myself  
126 and my sisters 'well, I'll tell your father'. Well there was a fear there,  
127 you know, he was the male, it's a gender thing and I don't know if we  
128 should try and fight it all that much, it's just the way things are. It  
129 really is.

130 I: Yes, ok

131 Pr: Sorry, on that point as well, I do feel that in a primary school, I think  
132 that it is imperative, I mean it is not always the case and it can't be  
133 always the case either but that children would have the experience of  
134 being taught by a male and a female and its the profession does not  
135 lend itself to as much males as females...

136 I: Because they are not coming in to the profession....

137 PR: No, they're not and it's unfortunate and I know that my own uncle had  
138 three boys in primary school at one time and he was quite put out by  
139 the fact that they would go through all their primary years with no male  
140 teacher.

141 I: Why aren't the men coming in to primary education in your opinion.  
142 What is stopping them?

143 Pr: I don't know and there's people that I know, who would be very very  
144 well suited to it as well. Am....whether it is a misconstrued notion as  
145 well that it is only for women only...

146 I: Because the pupils are younger, is it, because there are more men in  
147 second level schools.

148 I: Yes, and mind you, I know people as well who teach in a primary  
 149 school, one male who has taken juniors all the way up to 6<sup>th</sup>  
 150 class....am....whether it should be part of the training or experience  
 151 that in training, that a teacher would be given the opportunity to just  
 152 select .one -the junior end or the senior end and perfect the art of  
 153 teaching at that end....am....it might be a feeling that they just couldn't  
 154 cope with maybe snotty noses or a wet pants at a particular level.

155 I: I trained in England and that's what we did. We were given the choice  
 156 of training for infants, primary or secondary level.

157 Pr: Yes, and I know that the male teacher in this school has senior classes  
 158 for the most part of his teaching career and that's just his niche.

159 I: He takes the older ones.

160 Pr: Yes. Not that it's a no go area either. I'm sure there would be  
 161 negotiation if somebody wished to step up as well. But in our own  
 162 setting, I think the boys are best served with a male for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class  
 163 before they head off.

164 I: Ok, and consistency you said was important there.

165 Pr: Absolutely.

166 I: The most important thing according to pupils was respect.

167 Pr: Yes, the fact that they wouldn't feel it. I'm thinking of my own case  
 168 here , as Principal or even as class teacher, that you're so busy that you  
 169 might not have the time, you know, you are trying to present the  
 170 curriculum and you are trying to meet all of the different criteria,  
 171 IEP's, special needs, everything, school completion, home/school,  
 172 NEWB, there are different things on our plate so I wonder if children  
 173 kind of feel 'oh, she's not listening' although I did have a little boy in  
 174 today with a picture of his dog and I got very excited because he had  
 175 talked about these dogs for the last few days and all of a sudden they  
 176 were there in a photograph form so I feel he got something out of that.  
 177 I think, as teachers, there's something that we should be aware of - the  
 178 background that children are coming from as well. I think there is a lot  
 179 of cross talking, where, somebody used the phrase recently of barking  
 180 at the child. One word of barking or two words 'get that', close that',  
 181 open this, sit down, and there's no real conversation and children do  
 182 like to share their stories and an opportunity should be provided for  
 183 them too.

#### 184 **Teachers Focus-Group**

185 T6: I think all 3 are correct.

186 T2: I think particularly the last one, pupils said respect because it works  
 187 both ways, if you don't give the pupils respect, they are not going to  
 188 give you respect and if you are constantly picking at one pupil the  
 189 whole time, you're not going to win them over

190 T6: If you are consistent and fair, they will respect you.

191 T1: I think even the adults working in a school need to respect one another.  
 192 I think respect has to permeate the whole school system. All people  
 193 working in the school, from the caretaker to the Principal, there should  
 194 be respect shown to everyone

195 T6: Certainly reminding them that this is a civilised society, and what  
 196 makes it civilised and so on, because a lot of them are coming from a



197 dysfunctional, uncivilised background, that's my experience of it. I  
198 think they appreciate that, the fact that it's civilised and it's ordered.

199 **Pupils' Focus-Group 1**

200 **P1:** I think respect is well needed because if you wanted  
201 consistency and Behaviour....like you said.....

202 **I:** **Behaviour Training.**

203 **P1:** Behaviour Training. Now, that would be very good for the teachers  
204 because not all of them know how to handle pupils that are so bold and  
205 unwell mannered basically.

206 **I:** So what do they need then. What do the Principals and the teachers  
207 need if they don't know how to handle pupils?

208 **P1:** They need behaviour teaching.

209 **I:** Behaviour Training?

210 **P1:** yea, Behaviour teaching, a course, from experienced people.

211 **I:** Very good.

212 **P3:** I definitely agree with the fact that it should be consistent, like all the  
213 teachers having the same rules because if one teacher tells a child off  
214 for doing something wrong and another teacher doesn't, the child will  
215 get very confused and won't know which is right and which is wrong  
216 and it start going on for a lot longer then.

217 **I:** So you are saying consistency is important.

218 **P3:** Yea.

219 **P4:** I agree with behaviour training. There should be, like a course during  
220 the summer for teachers who don't know how to handle behaviour.

221 **I:** OK, that's good.

222 **P4:** I agree with the consistency but I think you need to be tougher on older  
223 classes because if you're not tough and if it's an equal amount of how  
224 you am... am...practice the rules, then, I think, as you get older, you  
225 need to practice them a lot more than when you are in other classes.

226 **I:** OK

227 **Pupil 5:** I think, like from the time you start in Junior Infants and the school  
228 opened and the school rules didn't change every year, they would be  
229 consistent and you didn't have to learn them every year, it would be  
230 confusing every year and changing.

231 **I:** So it's better to have consistent rules, from beginning school in Junior  
232 Infants to when you leave school in 6<sup>th</sup> class.

233 **Pupil5:** Yea.

234 **I:** Now what do you think about what the pupils said, that the number 1  
235 need was respect? Can we talk about that?

236 **P3:** Everyone has to have respect for everyone or the school will go totally  
237 backwards because everyone will be running around screaming and if  
238 you don't have respect for your classmates and especially your  
239 teachers, you are not going to learn anything or get educated.

240 **I:** So respect you think is very important.

241 **P3:** Yea.

242 **I:** Anyone would like to add anything to that?

243 **P7:** I think respect is important because if a teacher likes one student better  
244 than the other, the good student might do something wrong and not get  
245 in trouble and the bad student might do something wrong and get  
246 suspended or something.

247 I: So you think respect is about treating everyone the same. That's a  
 248 good idea.

249 Pupil 4: I agree because especially if am.. if they do the exact same thing and  
 250 one gets in trouble, that's completely out of order, they should both get  
 251 in trouble.

252 P2: I agree as well because if one person , the teacher's favourite done  
 253 something bad and got in trouble and the bad student could get in  
 254 trouble and be expelled. That teacher's favourite, who got in bad  
 255 trouble could actually keep on causing trouble and keep on getting  
 256 away with it scot-free. They deserve punishment.

257 I: OK, and do you feel that you are respected at the moment and do you  
 258 think that teachers' are respected at the moment. Tell me whether you  
 259 feel respected and whether you think teachers are respected.

260 P3: I think everyone is respected but I think that people who have  
 261 behaviour problems don't really respect the teacher and the pupils.

262 I: OK, anyone like to add anything to that?

263 P3: That's the one rule that all the teachers definitely enforce with all the  
 264 children, to have respect and because it's consistent, it is actually  
 265 working. The parents have respect for the teachers, teachers have  
 266 respect for the pupils and pupils for the teachers and the school is  
 267 going well because everyone is respecting each other.

268 P7: Yea, but respect is important in school. Most people have very good  
 269 respect in school but when pupils go home , they don't respect anyone,  
 270 it's just when they go to school sometimes.

271 I: OK.

272 P4: Respect is very important because if we are like sheep, because if one  
 273 person disrespects someone behind their back, and they all follow, well  
 274 that would lead them down a very bad path.

### **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

276 P3: The older teachers in the school are more consistent than the younger  
 277 teachers. The younger teachers lets us away with nearly anything and  
 278 the older ones just let their presence be known.

279 I: ok, so do you agree that all teachers should be consistent?

280 P3: Yes.

281 P1: Just say, if....our teacher does this sometimes. If we got in trouble,  
 282 for throwing stuff across the classroom and another day, she throws  
 283 something across the classroom, like .....it should be fair.

284 I: Ok, so the first time, would they get in trouble?

285 P!: Yea, they'd probably be put over to the black line for throwing  
 286 something and then, she'd probably throw something over as well, the  
 287 teacher like. She might laugh if someone was being cheeky and then  
 288 she might get someone in trouble for doing the same thing.

289 I: Ok, so in other words, you need consistency and it's not happening at  
 290 the moment.

291 P1: Yea, need more fairness.

292 P2: Just about the last question, you should be....like, there should be  
 293 someone to help you with behaviour, to go off somewhere, because  
 294 some teachers, when you are like misbehaving in the classroom, they  
 295 bring you outside the classroom and they start shouting at you, in the

296 hall, and that kind of disturbs the other classrooms from working and  
 297 kind of puts you off.

298 **Pupils in unison:** Yea, ha ha.

299 **P1:** If someone was in trouble, our teacher would bring you outside the  
 300 door and start roaring and shouting at you, but that does not make any  
 301 difference because it only disturbs the class.

302 **I:** so it doesn't help the person who has got into trouble, by getting cross  
 303 with them.

304 **P1:** Yea, our teacher never wants to be wrong for some reason. I  
 305 remember one time I heard her saying something and then when she  
 306 took us outside the door, she said that she said something else.

307 **I:** So your teacher doesn't want to... what did you say...wrong?

308 **P1:** Yea, she never wants to be wrong, she always wants to be right.

309 **P5:** And like \_\_\_\_\_ said, the other teachers, say like you went out to the  
 310 yard, the older teachers might put you in the Yard Book that we have.  
 311 But the younger teachers might say, oh, look, I'll put you in if you do it  
 312 again but if you went outside again, they still wouldn't put you in, and  
 313 they'd say the same thing

314 **I:** Alright.

315 **P6:** I think all the teachers should have the same method of instructions,  
 316 like you get in bigger trouble if you don't obey the rules.

317 **I:** So you're saying you need consistency in the school.

318 **I:** And what about the other thing that Principals said, they need  
 319 Behaviour training for teachers, what do you think of that?

320 **P1:** That would be a good idea because like, you have someone  
 321 misbehaving and disturbing the class, the teacher might not know what  
 322 to do to them.

323 **I:** Ok, if they got help to know how to manage.

324 **Pupils together:** Yea.

325 **P1:** Yea, if they got help instead of shouting at them at the door.....black  
 326 line.

327 **I:** Say that again?

328 **P1:** Putting people on the black line and shouting at them outside the door  
 329 doesn't make a difference.

330 **P3:** They're going to do that again.

331 **I:** It's not going to help the pupil or the class.

332 **P1:** If you put them out at PE or something ...

333 **P4:** Yea, something that they enjoy doing.

334 **I:** So you think that they should be stopped doing that, something they  
 335 enjoy doing?

336 **P1:** Yea.

337 **P4:** Some teachers like...am.....I forgot what I was going to say.

338 **I:** We were talking about PE, stopping pupils doing things that they like  
 339 to do.

340 **P4:** I forget....

341 **I:** Not to worry, it will come back to you.

342 **I:** Teachers said what was needed most in school was consistency, in  
 343 other word, they were agreeing with Principals. Now, pupils said what  
 344 was needed most in school was respect, what do you think about that?

345 P1: Yea, the teacher roars at us and we get in really big trouble if we even  
346 go near to roaring at her. She roars at us from like a metre away.

347 Pupils in unison: Yea, ha, ha.

348 P 1: We can hear her clearly if she can talk normal and if we are higher than  
349 our voice, she starts saying loads of stuff and sends us to the  
350 Principal's office. One time she said to me and my friend we were  
351 only taking the P I S S.

352 I: We are talking about respect. So are you saying then that....

353 P1: That like,.....if we are not allowed say something to her , she shouldn't  
354 be allowed say stuff to us. Sometimes she gives out to us for arguing  
355 with her but she argues back at us.

356 I: So you think that there should be the same rules for everybody.

357 Pupils together: Yea.

358 I: And respect, come back to respect, what are you saying about respect?

359 P1 So if we give her respect, she should give us respect.

360 I: Ok, that's fair enough.

361 P 4: I remember what I was going to say. Some teachers are good for like,  
362 teaching Maths and Irish but they are not very good at teaching  
363 children how to behave, so maybe they should go on a course to help  
364 them.

**Q6**

(**Usefulness** to a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme)

**I**

When asked if there was a need for a Whole-School Behaviour Support Programme in their school (supporting management, teachers and pupils on behaviour, managed by a Leadership Team in each school who decide on rules, emphasis is on the positive with rewards & consequences), most principals and teachers said yes. What are your views on the **usefulness** of such a programme?

**Pr1:**

Well, the latest document from the Department of Education is good on that, support and behaviour policies. It is positive and the whole school should discuss that, a whole-staff. Maybe there should be a Leadership Team. Maybe the principal should be part of that Leadership Team, or the deputy principal, maybe lead it. Every school should look at behaviour policies and behaviour support.

**I:**

And do you think that there should be one programme, one programme that would go all the way from Infants up to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

**Pr1:**

Yes, we would have a programme in place and it would be all the way up to 6<sup>th</sup>. But of course, you don't implement some parts of it in the younger classes because it mightn't be relevant but it's there in case it's relevant.

**I:**

Like you mean, you have rules for the whole school.

**Pr1:**

We have rules for the whole school, the same rules, the same policy, you know like a child gets sent to the principal, what happens, at what stage you would involve the parents. We would have a set programme in place. It wouldn't be just for senior classes, it would be for the whole school. So every teacher, no matter what class they are in, what class they are teaching, they know they have this support behind them, if certain steps have to be taken. But of course with the younger children and of course with the older children they don't have to be taken but they're there in case. So in other words, for example, before a parent is ever called in, there's a stage before that stage where they get a letter home. Those stages are carefully followed that the letter comes first, letting the parent know that we are having a problem with behaviour. Then another letter goes home after that that continues, saying would you come in and talk to the teacher. The next stage is would you come in and talk to the principal. So there are definite stages and that's for the whole school.

**Pr2**

It would be absolutely vital, yea, a whole-school approach, you mentioned already consistency but a whole-school approach to behaviour would be vital that every teacher who comes across an issue will deal with it similar to the other teacher, we'll say. Some would just ignore it and some would get over heated about it. I mean if you have a situation where some teachers are getting overheated about a particular issue and others just turning a blind eye to it, that would be the worst scenario. There is no chance there for the perpetrator or the misbehaving child to understand what is going on because one time it is interpreted as ok, another time it is interpreted as horrific so there has to be a whole-school approach which is based on a consistent, on-going and you know similar treatment of everybody.

**Pr3**

I think it is essential to have a whole school programme and as I was saying before, you know, once you have all the interested parties in the school on board, you have much more chance of the programme working. Am.....yes, the leadership team would be very interesting and I think it's important that there would be a team there to take it on board and that we'd all be there to support teachers because even if they're doing it in their classroom, we have to have a team to monitor it, review it and make sure that it's consistent throughout the school. Now I would have taken that on board myself but I would find the need there, for another person to liaise with, who might be working more closely on the ground floor at times, and to monitor and review,.....teachers as a group.....I think there's a need there to spend more time on it and it would become part of .....almost like the curriculum.....that it would become part of school life.

**Pr4**

I definitely would find a usefulness for that. It would create awareness among staff of emerging issues, unacceptable behaviour that would be filtering through, that may not have been an issue the previous year. Such a management support role would allow for EBD to be identified and would devise a plan or even discuss how to address them. So it doesn't mean that you would be working all the time and we wouldn't be a case of well, we're not concerned with this anymore. I suppose our numbers come into this here. We are a small school, with 87 on roll. Let me think of the effectiveness of such a programme....Yes, even if it was a chart and the people involved would update and follow through on the number for example being referred to the office or put by the wall or told to stay inside for safety reasons at break time - no harm in that at all. I would definitely encourage parental involvement as well.

**Teachers' Focus-Group**

- T4: Well, a whole-school programme would work better, it would be consistent. We have nothing like this. Individual teachers are on their own.
- T2: Our school is similar. From the principal's point of view, he says we don't have behaviour problems.
- T3: From the consistency point of view, I think the leadership has to come from the principal, from the top, you know.....
- T5: I suppose if the school is larger, you have to evolve into systems whereas if the school is smaller,.....
- T4: I know but you still need something before you can evolve into something.
- T6: That's right.
- T2: If you look at negative issues, I think there's a big need for the quality side of things, you know the code of behaviour and that. You know, we never have get together time, we never have whole-school assemblies or consistency. You always feel that you are on your own, and that's because they have no systems, you know the whole-school behaviour thing.
- T1: I think the whole-school behaviour programme is essential and I think it does evolve as the school gets bigger. We don't have the physical

99 resources to bring the whole school together because we are all in  
100 prefabs all over the place but what we do, we haven't set out the  
101 pastoral care for next year, but what we do now is say, the person  
102 responsible for 4<sup>th</sup> class once a month will bring three fourth classes  
103 together. Another system we have is the teacher on yard duty, each  
104 yard bag has a yard book in it so the yard book is in the bag and there  
105 are 10 yard behaviours which can be entered in the yard book. Let's  
106 say a child is in the toilets without permission, that is entered in the  
107 yard book. Once a month, it is a teacher's responsibility to go through  
108 the yard book and pick out the children that have appeared in it more  
109 than 3 times. Their names are entered into a Red Book. If their names  
110 are in the Red Book more than 3 times, their parents are called in for  
111 their behaviour. So it's like a tracking system for behaviour because  
112 the school is kind of big. The thing we notice about it is, we could  
113 actually now foretell who's going to be in that next year because the  
114 children that we know have behaviour difficulties, the children that  
115 have difficulties following rules, because it's the same children who  
116 come in again and again and again. We think that those children need  
117 something extra. They need a differentiated behaviour plan and that's  
118 causing a lot of difficulties among staff because you know, myself, I  
119 ask are we doing them any favours for differentiating behaviours  
120 because if they go out in the street, it won't be differentiated.

121 I: But I think the whole idea of a whole school plan is that it wouldn't be  
122 differentiated. I think that is a disadvantage of the plan. I think that if  
123 the rule is there, children will see if you are consistent with it.

124 T1: Say, you have special needs children throughout your school, say you  
125 have a Down's Syndrome child with an IQ a Moderate handicap, and  
126 she does something to you.....

127 T6: Well, she wouldn't actually do something to you for obvious reasons.

128 T1: Yea, but for the exact same reasons, you have a child who creates  
129 mayhem at home, you know, he may not be able to behave  
130 appropriately in the yard. If somebody thumped him, he'd thump them  
131 back straight away or if somebody does, something, he'll thump..... I  
132 think you have to make room for the special needs child.

133 T6: I suppose there's always room for discretion.

134 T1: I think you have to make room for discretion.

135 I: What happened Mary in your school when you had the whole-school  
136 behaviour support plan, did you differentiate for special needs  
137 children?

138 T2: I don't think we did. I think we set up the special support group and  
139 they were the children, you know who were.....We had a good few  
140 children who were in care and you know, one of the boys in my class,  
141 he was in care and his elder brother was in care and they were wild.  
142 The other brother disclosed that he was abused by his dad. I don't  
143 know whether it was because of.....and when things happened, you  
144 did deal with things as sensitively as you could.

#### 145 **Pupils Focus-Group 1**

146 **Q6** (Usefulness of a School Programme on Behaviour)

147 I: Principals and teachers thought it was a good idea to have a school  
148 programme on behaviour for the whole school. All classes would have

149 the same rules. Rules would be taught and practiced and pupils would  
 150 be rewarded for keeping the rules and penalised for breaking the rules.  
 151 **How** do you think this would be useful and **why** do you think it would  
 152 be useful?

153 **P1** It would be good because everyone would have the same rules and  
 154 pupils wouldn't have to learn new ones, like when they are going into  
 155 different classes.

156 **P3:** It would be good to have rewards and people would keep the rules  
 157 because they are getting rewards.

158 **P4:** It would be good to have penalties for breaking the rules because  
 159 everyone would know if you break the rule, you get a penalty.

160 **Pupils Focus-Group 2**

161 P2(g): I think it would be really good to have the same rules. They'd all like  
 162 have to keep to them and the teacher would have their way of keeping  
 163 their rules as well so no class would be different so everybody would  
 164 be the same and act the same.

165 I: Yes. So it would be a good idea.

166 P2: Yea.

167 P3: I think it would be hard if all the classes had the same rules, if 6<sup>th</sup> class  
 168 and Junior Infants had the same rules. Junior Infants might break them  
 169 and be punished, they don't know.

170 I: You think there shouldn't be the same rules for all?

171 P3: Well, Infants up to 1<sup>st</sup> class could be the same rules, then maybe 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 172 class to 6<sup>th</sup> class, there could be the same rules - like they have more  
 173 sense.

174 I: Yes, or maybe you could have less rules for infants?

175 P3: Yea.

176 P1: Say if a person is misbehaving, they could have a reward say every  
 177 Friday and that would probably get them into a routine.

178 I: So they would miss out the reward on a Friday if they didn't behave,  
 179 that might help them to behave?

180 P3: Yea.



**Q7** (Comments made about Behaviour Support)

**I:** On the topic of Behaviour Support, a Principal wrote:

*"In my experience, any case of serious misbehaviour was directly related to poor parenting skills. Such a pupil places massive stress on a school's resources. Smaller classes and one-to-one withdrawal are the only solutions".*

What is your view on this statement?

**Pr1:** Well, it's not always related to poor parenting skills. Behaviour might be directly related to maybe a trauma in the family, it might be the parents' split up, it could be a child being born. There could be a number of reasons why a child misbehaves so I wouldn't say it could be directly related to poor parenting skills. Sometimes, it could be poor teaching skills as well.

**I:** Ha ha, OK

**Pr:** So such a pupil, ya, ya, when a child seriously misbehaves, whether it is because of poor management skills in the classroom or because of difficulties to the child's experiences in his life. Of course this places stress on the class and on the teacher. Even if it's a small class, I'd say it still places stress on them but the one-to-one withdrawal I mentioned earlier, the Support Teacher is helpful in serious cases.

**Pr2** I wouldn't agree it is poor parenting skills although it may look like that initially. Am.....I would be aware that some of our major misbehaviours and indisciplines in our school would come from families that have fantastic parenting skills but something breaks down in the system for them. Essentially the system breaks down, it can occur through illness, through marriage break-ups or things like that. There are always an underlying reason for what might be termed their poor parenting. Just pure poor parenting skills I don't think is an excuse for , or a reason for most of them. There's a reason for the poor parenting if you want to step back again.

**Pr3** Yes, I think a lot of serious misbehaviour is directly related to poor parenting skills and I think in our society, there is an opt out for parents, out of their parenting skills. I think we do not expect enough from parents, that they have brought this child into the world, they owe it their full support, up to..... as far as they are capable and I think there needs to be a lot more work done there between parents with parents around parents who have weak parenting skills because I think it does place a lot of stress on schools. You have people coming in who just do not have the key components of how to be part of a group of people and .....they need to learn, you know.....the rules of functioning within a society, am.....for the benefit of all...and for their own benefit as well. I think children come to school and they just have never been parented properly and for that reason, they're lashing out at everybody. I'm not sure what appropriate responses are and.....yes, I do think it places huge responsibility on a school or huge stress. Yes, smaller classes...definitely, absolutely and as we all know, in a class of 20, you could have 20 different programmes running at any one time, indeed in a class of 10, and I think where you have one child who is particularly in need, it's very difficult in classes of 30 plus to actually.....respond to the needs of that child.

51 **I** Mm .....and would you say that serious misbehaviour is always  
52 directly related to poor parenting skills because I think that is what this  
53 principal is saying that it's always down to parents.

54 **Pr:** Mm.....yes, I think...serious misbehaviour. Now, I'm not talking  
55 about the once off thing that happens but I am talking about the sort  
56 of....continuency ....I would say is directly related to poor parenting  
57 skills and I think a lot of the time the parents just don't have the skills  
58 and the extended family is not a feature of society anymore so children  
59 who might have their needs met by maybe an older member of the  
60 household could....if there was a problem around parenting, that  
61 support isn't there for them anymore.

62 **I:** And can the school do anything about helping those parents then?  
63 **Pr:** Again, I think if there was a whole programme in place, I think going  
64 hand in hand with...the delivery of the curriculum. Now, I'm not  
65 saying giving equal time but I think...given an identity, this is how  
66 behaviour is expected.....in the country, in the borough, in the town,  
67 in the county, this is how we manage behaviour, this is....if you go to  
68 school, you can expect that this will be part of your schooling  
69 and.....I think it has been quite haphazard in that, you know....you  
70 went to school and I suppose a lot of behaviour was controlled up till  
71 now and I suppose as a society.... we were a very controlled society  
72 whether through religion or .....politics or however and now we have  
73 moved away from that and....but I think that something needs to be put  
74 in place because it doesn't happen.....you know...normally that every  
75 single child is going to come in, sit down beautifully and behave  
76 so.....gone are the days when you can stand at the top of the class and  
77 .....crack the whip.....so there needs to be a system in there that  
78 would guide schools, guide teachers and support them in incidences  
79 where there is serious misbehaviour and where it can be traced or is,  
80 obviously because of poor parenting skills.

81 **Pr4** well, I suppose realistically and what I have observed here, we  
82 definitely suffer the consequences of unsettled backgrounds,  
83 disorganised homes etc. and in a lot of cases, parents find it difficult to  
84 cope, am...so they're suffering at their end as well. There's definitely  
85 truth in the statement about the massive stress placed on the school  
86 resources as a result am...and quite recently we had an inspector here  
87 carrying out an assessment for a teacher's diploma, and one child was  
88 actually requested by the inspector to leave the room based on his EBD  
89 - emotional and behaviour disorder which the inspector would not have  
90 known about and it might have served her well if she had a profile of  
91 the class with just a little indication of the children in the room with for  
92 instance 'this is the explanation for this child's behaviour, this is the  
93 explanation for that child's behaviour. I feel it would have equipped  
94 her well, I mean to move him out, fair enough, I understand that the  
95 inspector did want the teacher to shine, I suppose it was her day to  
96 perform, and she worked extremely hard for her diploma but the reality  
97 is - she can't move him out on a day that he's having a little episode.  
98 Now we made arrangements and the child has a special needs assistant  
99 and I happened to be on an administrative day so we could cater for  
100 him but.....massive stress, it's just one of those things that you are

101 trying to cater for all the time. So definitely the influence of the home  
102 background does have a negative impact on the school.

103 I Mm .....and the serious misbehaviour, is it always related to poor  
104 parenting skills?

105 Pr: Well, there is always the chance that the child may have a disorder so  
106 the parent cannot take responsibility for that so I wouldn't say always.

107 **Teachers' Focus-Group**

108 T4: I don't know whether I would agree with it – that it's all to do with  
109 poor parenting skills. It's a bit extreme I think.

110 T6: Maybe inconsistency between parents could be an issue.

111 T1: Some children whose parents have wonderful parenting skills have  
112 behaviour issues driven by ADHD or what's going on in the class or  
113 other emotional issues.

114 T2: Some children get a lot of attention at home and come to school and  
115 can't cope. Sometimes younger children get more attention at home  
116 and play up but don't play up in school.

117 T6: I notice now that we are coming out of a time of plenty, children  
118 benefited because they got a lot of the gadgetry and a lot of the  
119 gadgetry took away from the conversation. I think that children are  
120 reflecting now a lesser quality of parenting. I find that 6<sup>th</sup> class, they  
121 have quietened down and it's infants that you dread to meet in the  
122 yard.

123 T1: I have noticed that, I have noticed a huge change, I suppose the way  
124 parents put their children's wishes central to everything, you know  
125 children's rights, parents think that everyone should be looking at these  
126 wonderful children, aren't they fantastic. We're meeting our junior  
127 infant parents today and one of the things that I will be saying to them,  
128 you know there are times that they will just have to do what they are  
129 told without any questions, get them used to that at home because that  
130 is what will happen here. Other things like, parents find it very hard to  
131 accept that their child isn't the top of the class. It just goes across all  
132 sorts of boundaries, you know, even people who are professionals  
133 themselves say 'how come he didn't get first and they are blaming the  
134 teacher and they're blaming somebody else.

135 T2: Yea, I'm coming from a time when you wouldn't say boo to a teacher  
136 and now it's a case of the parents saying 'the teacher is wrong, and not  
137 the parents are wrong.

138 T5: That's a big thing, you give out to a child now and you kind of think,  
139 what's her parent going to say, am I going to have her tomorrow  
140 morning?

141 T4; Yea, sure.

142 T2: Yea, in my time, if I went home to my parents and said the teacher  
143 gave out to me, they would say 'well, you must have deserved it'.

144 T4: You get a sense from senior pupils, they go home and say what has  
145 gone on in school and parents say 'oh, don't mind her'.

146 Teachers together: Yea.

147 T1: I think that it's imperative that we keep parents informed of the  
148 discipline practices in the school. They seem to accept that they have  
149 to obey the rules in secondary schools but in primary schools, they are  
150 more protected by the parents.

151 Teachers together: yea.

152 **Pupils' Focus-Group 1**

153 **Q7** (Comments made about Behaviour Support)

154 **I:** A **Principal** in another school thought that when pupils misbehave, it  
155 is because their parents did not teach them how to behave well. **Why**  
156 do you think pupils misbehave sometimes and **what** is the best way  
157 they can be helped? So **why** do you think they misbehave?

158 Pupil 1: From a young age maybe, behaviour not being corrected at home  
159 and it just leads on to school and it just gets worse and worse as they  
160 go on.

161 P3: Maybe the child is not getting enough attention and because he is not  
162 getting attention, he's looking for it and when he doesn't get attention,  
163 he's starting to get bad mannered and no respect for anybody, because  
164 he's not getting attention from anyone.

165 P2: If a child misbehaves and he kind of does something really bad, he or  
166 she does something really bad, it's probably fun to be talked about at a  
167 break and he might think it's cool and she might think it's cool and  
168 might go and do it again so that's probably why they are misbehaving  
169 because they think it's cool.

170 **I:** OK

171 P5: Maybe at home, he gets a certain amount of attention and when he  
172 doesn't get it in school, he acts out to try and achieve it.

173 **I:** So what is the best way they can be helped then, a pupil who  
174 misbehaves?

175 *Silence*

176 **I:** The Principal thinks that it is because of their parents are not teaching  
177 them how to behave so what is the best way to help them?

178 P5: Maybe if their parents encourage it more at home and the Principal get  
179 somebody in to talk to them , to understand them.

180 P1: Maybe if the Principal lets the parents of that child know, bring them  
181 into school and let them see how they are acting in school and the  
182 parent could say that he's actually not getting this from home, he must  
183 be getting it from some pupil here and that's probably the reason and  
184 the Principal couldn't be blaming the home and have to say sorry to the  
185 father or the mother.

186 P4: I think the Principal should do like a survey, put a camera in and if that  
187 child consistently misbehaves, show it to the parents and ask them  
188 where is he getting this, is he getting it at home or is he picking it up  
189 from school.

190 **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

191 Pupil 4: I think maybe if they rang their parents and told them they were  
192 misbehaving, and got their parent to punish them, then I think they  
193 wouldn't misbehave that often.

194 **I:** Ok, so help from the parents.

195 P5: If it was the parents that left them get away with it, they should fix it  
196 and then send them back to school.

197 I: Alright.  
198 P2: I think they should tell the parents as well because the parents probably  
199 have more control over them and they might be like...much stricter  
200 and they'd know what to say to them whereas the teachers don't know  
201 them that well and don't really know what they're like, so I think tell  
202 the parents.  
203 I: So parents are Number 1.  
204 P1: Like if you shout at one child, they might get upset whereas the parents  
205 won't shout at them, they'll just talk to them and they'll know how  
206 they are going to react to it.

1 **Q8**

2 I: And a teacher made the following comment on Behaviour Support:  
3 *"There is a need for whole-school behaviour support as the only*  
4 *support now is for juniors, and senior pupils who go to learning*  
5 *support. This leaves senior teachers isolated, stressed/overwhelmed".*  
6 Can you comment?

7 **Pr1:** I don't really understand that comment. In our school, I think there  
8 would be support for Junior classes, Middle classes and Senior classes.

9 I: On behaviour?

10 Pr: Yea.

11 I: So in your school, senior teachers shouldn't feel stressed.

12 Pr: No, sometimes because the child is older and maybe less easy to bully  
13 by the teacher and they are now becoming young adolescents earlier,  
14 teachers in Senior classes sometimes find behaviour difficult but it's  
15 just because a child is growing into a young adult, not because there is  
16 not support there, so you have to be more skilled in dealing with them.

17 I: Ha, ha, so it's back to the teacher.

18 Pr: Yea, yea and the teacher getting support from the whole school.

19 **Pr2**

20 I don't fully understand how they mean for Junior school. I would  
21 have thought that Codes of Discipline are structured more to deal with  
22 children in the middle school and Senior School than in Junior school  
23 because we don't apply our codes of discipline really to Infant classes  
24 first day because the children wouldn't have ability to understand their  
25 behaviour or to deal with it themselves. So discipline is through the  
26 parents in all cases whereas in middle classes and senior classes, it is  
27 through the child, individually and sometimes in groups but no, I  
28 wouldn't agree. I find that the focus, the main focus is around 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>  
29 class. It used to be 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class years ago but most of the problems  
30 seem to arise around 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> classes and by the time they have got into  
31 5<sup>th</sup> class, they have settled down and they seem to have matured and  
32 they seem to just fit into a system, learning to deal with the calls of  
33 daily life, becoming acclimatised to school. I mean senior classes are  
34 not too difficult anymore as regards discipline whereas 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> classes  
are....

35 **Pr3**

36 Yes, I would have looked at a lot of whole-school behaviour  
37 programmes and what I find is that there are some fabulous ideas for  
38 junior pupils but they are never the areas where there's a problem. I  
39 find generally it's easy enough to manage or set up a programme.  
40 where the greatest need I think is at senior level and there isn't enough  
41 support there for teachers and even where you do put a programme in  
42 place, like the programme that we've put in place at the moment,  
43 there are still a lot of areas where it doesn't actually address the age of  
44 the pupil. Now, it works beautifully at the junior level, no problem  
45 whatever, ..... senior level would be much more difficult. What I have  
46 noticed is where we have started from the very beginning with the  
47 programme, in the infant classes, those children are currently in 2<sup>nd</sup>  
48 class, and they actually....now I would need to review it by the time  
49 they reach the senior level, but there has actually.....been a positive  
50 effect of the programme but I'd still be very interested to see...you  
know, by the time they reach....

51 I; ...yea, how it pans out (laugh)  
52 Pr: Yea (laugh)...that will be the proof of the pudding.....  
53 **Pr4** Yes, I can understand that, I suppose there is a focus on children who  
54 need support for learning but the ones who are in need of additional  
55 support for behaviour don't get the attention, so there is a shortfall fall  
56 there, so you can see that it is a serious issue, yea, because it leaves  
57 those children unsupported. If there was a Whole-School programme  
58 in the school, she would feel supported.

59 **Teachers' Focus-Group**

60 T1: Throughout our whole school, we would have a social group, or  
61 children with diagnosed special needs and we would have what you  
62 would call a social group where they go and play games on social skills  
63 and sometimes we would put who have diagnosed behaviour problems  
64 but not special needs in with them, once or twice a week and it is a nice  
65 thing. It could be gardening.....

66 T5: Is that all classes?

67 T1: Well, it would be 4-6 children together depending on each year. We  
68 use that programme 'Talk About' programme which teachers social  
69 skills and find it absolutely excellent. It's a social skills education  
70 package for developing self-esteem. We teach that in that group and  
71 we find that it has really really paid off, it teaches them social skills.  
72 Another one is the SALT programme.

73 T5: Oh yea. We've just bought that. I tried it out the other day. It gives a  
74 scenario. The situation blows up. Then you get the added SALT  
75 which is stop, ask, listen and talk. And then you tell the story again and  
76 they can see the different. It's really good. I liked it.

77 T6: It's to resolve conflict.

78 T1: We use Circle Time throughout the school too.

79 T4: Again Circle Time, doesn't it have to work its way up?

80 T1: Yea.

81 T4: I find in 6<sup>th</sup> class, to start, it is very difficult.

82 T1: It's difficult, yea, but it does work, and I think we used it,  
83 exceptionally well with 4<sup>th</sup> class girls, we had a problem with 4<sup>th</sup> class  
84 girls, you know, the bitchiness of 4<sup>th</sup> class girls, people being bullied  
85 by people being left out, and by their appearance and their clothes and  
86 their hair. We did it, I'm not saying we sorted it all out but it certainly  
87 brought it into the open where it was you know.....

88 T4: Yea, I used it in the younger classes but.....

89 T1: Yea, it does need to be developed, yea.

90 T4: I find they can't even listen to each other and they can't respect  
91 someone else's opinion. But I have to agree with what the teacher said  
92 in this statement. I myself feel overwhelmed sometimes being in the  
93 senior end of the school and having no support. The problem in our  
94 school is that nobody wants to come in to 6<sup>th</sup> class. I know you are  
95 saying a lot of the behaviour is at the junior end of the school.  
96 Everybody in our school dreads the senior end..... 6<sup>th</sup> class because  
97 of the behaviours and younger teachers don't want to go in there.  
98 Every year for the last 5 years we had a different person going in.

99 T1: In ours, it's totally different.

100 T4: Really?

101 T1: Yea, with 6<sup>th</sup> class.

102 T6: Well, in a neighbouring school to me now, where the parents are in the

103 majority middle-class well-to-do parents and it was very difficult to get

104 anybody to take on 6<sup>th</sup> class.

105 T4: And a lot of the time those parents cause problems.

106 T1: Anyone who takes 6<sup>th</sup> class, they have great respect. I think, once you

107 hit 6<sup>th</sup> class, you have huge responsibility. You help.... kind of run the

108 school. You do the bell in the morning, 6<sup>th</sup> class helps run the school.

109 They help out in the junior yard. They're given huge responsibility

110 and at the end of it We have just come back from a trip from

111 Holland. We just took 63 children to Holland two weeks ago and we

112 didn't have one issue of behaviour the whole time. Included in that

113 were some with fierce behaviour....one girl had fierce behaviour

114 problems.....that trip is going on for the last 15 years, they know that

115 that's their reward if they behave maturely and responsibly you know.

116 But it takes a huge amount of responsibility but the Principal takes that

117 on as his responsibility.

118 T4: We go to the Burren for our three days and like that, it's the carrot but

119 we did leave 3 people behind this because of serious behaviour and a

120 member of staff did get hurt in the incident but it was a battle with the

121 Principal to leave these children behind and a lot of the response is

122 'Are you really going to get anywhere with them, why are you wasting

123 all your energy. You know, I find all of that frustrating.

124 T1: I would too, yea.

125 T4: And then, the younger teacher that might be next door is getting no

126 support and you go and say 'now look, now is the time we need

127 support up here, you know, it's critical at this moment in time, it's

128 just.....not addressed.

129 T1: Yea.

### 130 **Pupils' Focus -Group 1**

131 **Q8** A teacher wrote about the need for a school programme on behaviour

132 because she says that *right now, help on behaviour is only given by the*

133 *learning support teacher to infants and to those who already go to*

134 *learning support for English/Maths. No help is given to older pupils*

135 *who have problems with behaviour.* The teacher feels that a school

136 programme on behaviour would help her. What do you think?

137 Pu3: I agree with the teacher. Maybe the child... the teacher is not giving

138 him much attention and like, the Learning Support teacher won't take

139 him. I think they should get help or have a programme.

140 I: So you think a programme would be helpful.

141 P3: Yea, as they said there, it's only the Learning Support teachers are

142 trying to deal with behaviour but it's not really their job. Like if you

143 are there as well trying to teach children who are falling behind. They

144 are still trying to teach children so they should have one specific

145 person in to deal with behaviour alone and not Maths and English and

146 the whole lot.



147 P2: I think they should get in a special person and ask them what is going  
148 on at home, in case they are being abused and in school in case they  
149 are being bullied.

150 I: OK

151 P4: I think some teachers have like, a favourite. But if the person that is  
152 misbehaving is not the favourite and he or she is not getting attention  
153 and the favourite is. So that would make the behaviour worse and  
154 worse.

### 155 **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

156 P1: I think it would be a good idea, because if someone was misbehaving,  
157 the teacher would know what to do with them.

158 I: If there was a proper programme in school?

159 P1: Yea.

160 P1: Well, this wasn't really a programme but we used to have like a tree, a  
161 tree in our class, and like if you did something good, you got a golden  
162 leaf and you could put the leaf on the tree and everybody used to be  
163 really happy, like when we were in Junior and like senior infants,  
164 when they got a gold leaf, they were really happy.

165 I: ah, isn't that nice.

166 P3: Like a reward for doing something good and if you behaved properly,  
167 you used to get a reward and they should still do that, if not a golden  
168 leaf.

169 I: So you used to get that in the Infant classes, is it?

170 Pupils together: Yea.

171 I: But it stopped when?

172 P3: I think a couple of years ago. I don't know.....

173 I: Maybe it stops after a certain class.

174 Pupils together: No, all classes.

175 P1: No, it just stopped completely.

176 Pupils together: Yea.

177 I: Because it's the class teacher stopped it, is it?

178 Pupils together: Yea.

179 I: Maybe different classes still have it?

180 Pupils together: No,

181 P3: No, I don't think so.

182 I: You don't think anyone has it.

183 P1:

184 I: So you are saying people behave better when you are rewarded.

185 Pupils: Yea.

186 P1: Behaviour training for the older classes because 1<sup>st</sup> class might talk out  
187 of turn and sixth class might do something serious like fight or start  
188 cursing, different stuff, and 1<sup>st</sup> class, like they don't know what they  
189 are doing whereas 6<sup>th</sup> class do.

190 I: So say that in another way, just to make sure I understand you.

191 P1: Behaviour support for older classes because they do more serious stuff  
192 and maybe if they got behaviour support, they wouldn't do more  
193 serious stuff. 1<sup>st</sup> class, they don't really need it that much.

194 I: So you feel that support is more needed for the older children than for  
195 the younger children.

196 P1: Yes.

197 P6: I think that every week or every two weeks, if a teacher comes in and  
198 tells them about behaviour, support and that, what could happen if they  
199 carried on like this, where it would end up.  
200 I: Like a formal talk on behaviour, from, is it the Principal or the teacher?  
201 P6: Well, if they got someone proper in school who knew about behaviour,  
202 someone experienced.  
203 I: Someone who knew about behaviour, someone to come in and give a  
204 talk every so often.  
205 P6: Yea.  
206 P1: Something more serious than the Red Book. That's just a book that  
207 they write your name in.  
208 I: Who uses the Red Book?  
209 Pupils together: the Principal.  
210 P1: If you get in trouble, you get in the Red Book, if you did something  
211 serious. They put your name in it.  
212 P2: It's supposed to be really bad if you get your name written in three  
213 times.  
214 I: OK  
215 P4: I think some teachers have like, a favourite. But if the person that is  
216 misbehaving is not the favourite and he or she is not getting attention  
217 and the favourite is. So that would make the behaviour worse and  
218 worse.

1   **Q9**                   A pupil made the following comment on Behaviour Support:  
2                   *"Our school should have a special teacher on behaviour"*.  
3                   Can you comment on that?

4   **Pr1:**               Well, certainly, the resources wouldn't be there for that nowadays. As  
5                   I said there are special teachers in some schools, in \_\_\_\_\_, I know  
6                   there are two support teachers on behaviour in that particular school. If  
7                   we were offered a teacher, a special teacher on behaviour, we would  
8                   use it elsewhere because the teacher would be idle most of the day.  
9                   *(laugh)*, I would think. I know years ago, they used to have special  
10                  teachers for travellers and then they withdrew that. And they are now  
11                  withdrawing some special teachers and I would say in our school there  
12                  is no need for them but I would say in certain schools there would be  
13                  need for them. In most schools, there isn't need for special teachers on  
14                  behaviour.

15   **I;**                 I suppose this begs the question then, should Behaviour Support be  
16                  part of the Brief of Learning Support/Resource teachers and if so, how  
17                  would you prioritise between pupils who need academic support and  
18                  pupils who need behaviour support? Alternatively, should there be a  
19                  separate post?

20   **Pr:**               No, I wouldn't say it should be the job of the Learning support teacher  
21                  or Resource Teacher to deal with misbehaviour because they're there  
22                  to...., they could be seen then as a teacher, as a person who children  
23                  who misbehaves get sent to. It's usually children to need academic  
24                  support in literacy or numeracy or language is getting support and they  
25                  shouldn't be seen in a negative way that are sent to, for behaviour  
26                  problems. They would also need training if they were used, that  
27                  special training, because they are not trained to do that. So I would say  
28                  at the moment, the way to do it, if you had serious difficulty, yes, have  
29                  a special support teacher if the State can afford it. If you haven't that,  
30                  that the Principal and support staff as a team should help the classroom  
31                  teacher to deal with behaviour and the parents, involving the parents,  
32                  not having another layer, another teacher to do that.

33   **I:**                 OK, so you can't see the point of the child going out to the Learning  
34                  Support/Resource teacher for behaviour?

35   **Pr:**               I can if it's for listening, because to listen, because you know in a  
36                  classroom, if it's delicate or if it's taking up too much time, that for  
37                  some reason the child isn't forthcoming and we know that there is a  
38                  problem and we can't get to the bottom of it and you don't want the  
39                  whole class to hear about it, or else the child won't say it in front of the  
40                  class. And if there is another member of staff, whether it is the  
41                  Resource teacher, or the Principal or someone else that they trust and  
42                  that they'll talk to and we find out how we can help that child. We  
43                  might send the child for Counselling because we are not really trained  
44                  to do it. Yes, there is a need for a child to get support that way but I  
45                  wouldn't have a post designed for that. It would depend on the school.

46   **Pr2**               I think it is a fantastic idea if there is somebody highly skilled in issues  
47                  around backgrounds to misbehaviours and indisciplines to guide both  
48                  the pupils and the staff and support them because there are times when,  
49                  if you were to work on behaviour modification plans, it does take some  
50                  time to set them up, making sure that they are checked as you go along

51 and interpreting what has happened. So if there was somebody skilled  
52 and trained in that, a feature of school life, it would be very important,  
53 some of the help that goes into special education. It would be a  
54 fantastic idea. It would be a new resource required in a school and  
55 would also require quite a bit of training not given to people at any  
56 level inside the school. Boards of management don't get that training,  
57 Principals don't and classroom teachers don't. Special Ed. teachers  
58 may get a bit of it in certain circumstances but not enough.

59 Pr3 I think there should be a separate post or certainly a post of  
60 responsibility there where people have time and funds to manage a  
61 behaviour support programme and I think it needs to be much more  
62 formal and again, much more maybe national, or maybe at more local  
63 level, that an agreed.....but actually I think at National level, we need  
64 to look at behaviour and I think we need to start with children and I do  
65 think that it would be money well spent to have a post in a school  
66 where behaviour is managed through that post because what happens I  
67 think through the learning support and special needs teachers, I mean  
68 they have all the academic, that is a huge job, they also tailor the  
69 existing programme within the school as far as behaviour is concerned  
70 so I'm not sure that there is space there to give them an extra post but I  
71 do think there should be a post, now whether it would be shared within  
72 maybe a group of schools or whatever, but I do think, absolutely there  
73 needs to be a post there.

74 I: Mm...and do you think that behaviour teacher.....him or her, do you  
75 think they should go for training for that or it is something that, like,  
76 they were Learning Support and that they just take on a new mantle?

77 Pr: No, I think there is a huge need within the country to look at types of  
78 behaviour programmes.....ah....that have worked maybe, in other  
79 countries..... or....and I am not saying that we are not perfectly  
80 capable of coming up with our own ....research..... and the types of  
81 programmes that have been used in other countries and maybe tailor a  
82 programme for our own country because I do think, especially at the  
83 moment because I think the country is in transition and we've gone  
84 from that huge control to now.....much less control and people are left  
85 in a vacuum and I think you know, people need guidelines, as you  
86 know...this is what's expected, this is how you behave if you're on the  
87 street at 12 o'clock at night, this is how you behave when you go to  
88 school and you are in a group where people are learning so I see a huge  
89 need there and I would say training would be essential, research is  
90 essential....ah....to look at how these programmes have worked or  
91 what part or what components of these programmes have worked.

92 Pr4 Yes, in some instances, I can see that that definitely would be of  
93 benefit to the children. 'Right, this is the person that I have to talk to  
94 with regard to my behaviour'. But you would hope that it would not  
95 always be in a negative way either. You would hope that it would be  
96 counteracted in as much in a positive way, for example, 'You know, I  
97 want you to talk to Mr. McGrath, I've been telling you about your  
98 good work, I'm the class teacher so off you go now, go to Mr.  
99 McGrath and talk to him'. I don't know about Learning Support or  
100 Resource but I know from my experience here, I would not put that

extra responsibility on a stressed resource person. Well, that's here. In a bigger school it could be a different case. I feel that Learning Support and Resource have a place to play but it shouldn't be their total responsibility. So I suppose that I am heading down the line of saying that it should be a separate post. The behaviour, a child's behaviour, I feel that teacher's would need training, they would benefit from that. I mean there's your continuity again, I suppose if it's a recognised post, there's a particular role, it's a particular job description and I suppose for the whole school to know what this person is about, it definitely would require training.

### **Teachers' Focus-Group**

T5: I think a lot of children who go to Resource have a good relationship with that teacher because they go in small groups. If something happened then in my class, I might say to the /Resource teacher, listen, would you ever come down and have a word because ....it's another person talking to them.

T1: I think the academic end and behaviour go together.

Teachers together: Yea.

T6: I would rather they accepted that everybody is responsible for behaviour management. (Teacher 6 addressed teacher 1): What you said about collating all those entries into a book..

T1: That's a post of responsibility. But that person doesn't have to deal with the issues, just collate....The other thing I think about where learning support/resource....you know where a child with behaviour problems..... you always have an antecedent....you kind of know the things that trigger it and if you see it beginning.....we did that crisis management for a particular traveller child we had. The Board of Management paid for 3 teachers to train in it and it was where you watch out for the triggers and if you see him beginning to .....and it might mean that you have to differentiate behaviours so for instance if you were in the yard and he had a bags of crisps and he wasn't allowed, the teacher walked up and said 'you know Paddy, you are not allowed those' and he said 'so what, and what are you going to do about it, he'd say like that so that triggers, if you kept going with him, he would lash out. So all the teachers were instructed then that when he did that, you just had to turn around and say 'would you go and get Mrs. Dunne in the staff-room and then our role was to go out and say 'Paddy, I need you to come with me, I want you to do something' and then you removed him from the playground until he calmed down and then you dealt with the behaviour issue so that you didn't allow it because it had turned in once or twice into a situation where he threw chairs and hit somebody and hurt somebody. That was what that Therapeutic Crisis was called. Now the first phase of that was: talking the children down. Now the next bit was manual handling, which is used in centres and places like that. We didn't do that part of it but it was really really good training. It was very expensive but the Board of Management paid for it. We did it at a summer course one year.

T6: Manual Handling – are you talking about physical restraint?

T1: Physical restraint, manual handling the next bit was. At the minute, we have a little boy in junior infants, and when he flips like that, we

151 physically have to pick him up because he picks up all the lunchboxes  
 152 and throws them. And it's how to do that safely without injuring  
 153 yourself or others. And also we have asked the parents to sign that  
 154 when he behaves like that, that they are ok with us lifting him or  
 155 removing him from the room or when he starts trying to run home that  
 156 we physically try and take him away from the door. That was our  
 157 Board of Management advice, that people would train in this, the same  
 158 as first aid and that the parents sign up to you doing it.

159 T2: I had a similar situation with the boy I was talking about before, the  
 160 one in care, and we were told if he start, if the trigger starts to bubble,  
 161 then you either try and you know, calm him down before you deal with  
 162 the problem and sometimes it might end with him saying 'F--- off you  
 163 bitch' and you say 'right kids, up, we're going' and you leave the room  
 164 and make somebody aware that you left him there.....you wouldn't go  
 165 too far but you would make sure that the children weren't exposed to  
 166 him going.....absolutely ballistic. So you would leave him there to  
 167 cool down and then somebody would come and collect him and then  
 168 we could go back to the class.

169 T1: You see all of that means that there has to be a kind of organised  
 170 support and that's what we miss in Irish schools in that there is nobody  
 171 free to lead that support. Now, I'm a resource teacher and I try and  
 172 leave myself free, as well as the Principal, with a little time for that sort  
 173 of thing, and if someone..... a teacher, sends up a child saying, the  
 174 teacher really needs you', I know that I have to go straight away  
 175 because that child is kicking off, and before he has a chance to impact  
 176 on other children. I think that is what we really need, is that somebody  
 177 with that little bit of free time and I think that's where resource or  
 178 support teachers are needed. You just have to get somebody in and  
 179 just.....remove the other children. We had a child who had to go to a  
 180 special school. She had, on the day that the school psychologist,  
 181 no....the psychiatrist came to do the school visit on her, she was sitting  
 182 at the table and she obviously realised, she pushed the table so hard  
 183 that she knocked three children back, I jumped up to catch children  
 184 falling and I caught my toe in the flip chart holder and knocked it down  
 185 on top of the psychiatrist.

186 Laughter

187 T1: The child jumped up on the window sill and got out the window.  
 188 So....her behaviour was so extreme, the children who were with her  
 189 are now going into 6<sup>th</sup> class and they still talk about her, and the  
 190 parents would say that if they meet her in the street that they are still  
 191 traumatised by her.

192 T6: That's what is coming in now, children with very extreme behaviour.

193 T1: Yea, very extreme behaviour.

194 T6: I'm not exactly sure but I suppose it's a collapse in society.

195 T1: The other thing that we have come across, only recently and again it is  
 196 in a very mixed community is: 6<sup>th</sup> class children who would be using  
 197 substances. I had that when I taught in Coolock. It was the start of the  
 198 drugs thing and 6<sup>th</sup> class children had alcohol or glue and I notice that  
 199 again happening.

200 I: How do they stand out in the class? How do you know?

201 T1: Well, they would be very very tired, very very edgy, you  
202 know.....and they also get a sore mouth from doing the glue, they get  
203 scabs around their mouth.

204 **Pupils' Focus-Group 1**

205 P3: I think there should be a special behaviour teacher because a Learning  
206 Support teacher only teaches English or Maths and all the stuff that  
207 children are stuck on and a proper teacher just teaches. They should  
208 have a person who comes in and talks to them and helps them.

209 I: On behaviour?

210 P3: Yea.

211 P1: I think we need a different person to come in and help with behaviour  
212 because Learning Support teachers only help them on Maths and  
213 English when they are falling behind and they're not qualified to help  
214 them with their behaviour or if they're angry or something.

215 I: Right. So you think it's about qualifications, it would be better if they  
216 were qualified on behaviour?

217 P1: Yea.

218 **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

219 P3: Yea, a special teacher on behaviour because there could be an  
220 improvement over a couple of weeks on their behaviour in school.

221 I: You think if they were supported, they would be better behaved?

222 Pu3 Yea, they might have a special little room and the teacher would send  
223 him up.

224 P1: It only takes one teacher to go on a behaviour course and they know  
225 about behaviour. Like if you did do something wrong and you were  
226 misbehaving, the teacher could go to the other teacher and say 'What  
227 do I do?' and they should get advice from that teacher.

1 **Q10 (Gender)**

2 I: Research tells us that boys tend to cause more behaviour problems than girls,  
3 and town schools tend to have more behaviour problems than country schools.  
4 What do you think or what are your experiences?

5 **Pr1:** Well, it is a generalisation but there's some truth in it. But I think boys  
6 and girls shouldn't be in separate schools. For a start, I think they  
7 should be together. I think when boys are on their own in a school, an  
8 all-boys school, the behaviour is worse than an all-girls school.

9 I: what about mixed?

10 Pr: In mixed schools, I think the boys behave just as good as the girls.  
11 Maybe in a different way, they misbehave than the girls misbehave, but  
12 both can misbehave.

13 I: and do you think that boys are helped by the girls?

14 Pr: And girls by the boys. But yes, why do the boys misbehave? They  
15 tend to ....the more physical element comes out when they are herded  
16 into a school, (*laugh*) a single sex school. And I think it's unnatural.  
17 It's unnatural for the girls as well but maybe they misbehave in a  
18 quieter way. But certainly, the boys, it's more obvious, when they're  
19 herded together in single sex schools.

20 I: And town schools then have more behaviour schools than country  
21 schools? Would you have found that in your time?

22 Pr: I would have found that, yea, but again, you can get problems  
23 everywhere but maybe they're more dense in a town school. Yea,  
24 often in a town school, they might come from a particular estate that  
25 has social problems or anti-social behaviour in a particular estate or  
26 something like that whereas in the countryside, very often there aren't  
27 those estates and you don't get this mass anti-social behaviour. that  
28 you get in towns.

29 **Pr2** Well, We are a mixed school and we call ourselves rural but we are  
30 half rural and half urban at this stage. Am...Boys cause one kind of  
31 ....., a set of problems that are very open and very easy to spot  
32 whereas girls cause another range of problems that are a lot more  
33 hidden and a lot more discreet. We are very aware of problems that go  
34 on in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class around girls, like leaving each other out and  
35 would cause as much problems as the issues around boys behaviour.  
36 Even if you were to itemise a list, there would be more boys involved  
37 in misbehaviours but very often they're misbehaviours that are quite  
38 correctible and rather straight forward. We find that the girls issues ,  
39 they can be very deep seated and take quite a bit of work and a bit of  
40 understanding and very hard to unroot and very difficult on parents as  
41 well, the girls issues, because this thing of people being left out and  
42 people being isolated and people being blamed for certain things. You  
43 get some very very deep rooted issues and very very upsetting for  
44 parents. So I'm sure that research shows that boys have more  
45 indiscipline problems than girls. I would think that from where we  
46 stand, that the girls problems take us quite more time to sort out and  
47 often take up to 18 months to sort out rather than some of the boys  
48 issues, they can be sorted out in a shorter period, maybe 2 or 3 weeks.

49 The second part of the question.....

50 I: The town schools and country schools.....



51 Pr: I think that perception is there but I would have thought that rural  
52 schools in the past were smaller and there would be other factors  
53 besides, just, I would say on a percentage basis that behaviour is the  
54 same across the urban/rural divide .

55 I: Yes,  
56 Pr: I don't have any problem with it anyway. But around the gender issue,  
57 I think a lot of the research previously was too straight forward.  
58 People ticked off boxes about...somebody hit somebody and what girls  
59 and boys did, whereas more modern research, they get a background to  
60 some of the things and very often, girls would go quiet and the issues  
61 won't manifest and it doesn't come to the eye of the teachers so it  
62 doesn't seem like a problem when in actual fact it is a huge problem to  
63 a particular family and to a particular child I think.

64 I: So you think that boys misbehaviour is more open.  
65 Pr: It's more open and more manifest and in your face whereas the girls  
66 thing, you have to be watching out for the girls misbehaviour. They're  
67 inclined not to tell because quite a lot of it comes from people that  
68 would be perceived as their friends or their in-group, whereas a lot of  
69 the boys things are from out-groups and it is a lot easier for staff and  
70 that to see.

71 I: It's more visual.  
72 Pr: It's very much a visual straight up frontal thing.

73 Pr3 I agree (laugh)...for the reason that I think that we are looking at two  
74 different types of people as in every classroom, you have .....you  
75 know..... girls do tend to be that bit more nurturing, do tend to have  
76 the sort of components you know, associated with girls. Boys tend to  
77 chance their arm a bit more and I know that is not a good way about  
78 saying it but they do tend to push the boundaries a bit more. Now girls  
79 I know misbehave as well but it's sort of more controlled, it might be  
80 equally hurtful- boys do ....am...tend to lash out but I do think that  
81 some of the more serious problems generally happen among the boys  
82 and I would find that within the school.

83 Am.....The town schools, yes, I do think that there is something there  
84 and I think mainly because .....again, the loss of the extended  
85 family.....more where people have moved into a locality because of  
86 work, it tends to be the parents and the children together. Maybe in the  
87 country, people tend to maybe build houses close to grandparents and  
88 then you do get that extended family support. But also I think the  
89 children in the country have more free time or sorry, more space, they  
90 tend to be more active so .....I would always find the busier children  
91 are, the less behaviour problems there are so around that, I would say,  
92 yes, that is a feature and I would say, during my teaching career,  
93 definitely there is more of a challenge around behaviour that are totally  
94 male, that have males up to 6<sup>th</sup> class. I do think there might be more of  
95 a challenge for those schools.

96 I: Mm..... and here, you have a mixed school here, haven't you?  
97 Pr: I have a mixed school.  
98 I: And about the boys behaviour, do you mean that it is more visual,  
99 more open than girls misbehaviour?

100 Pr: Yes, it can be more destructive I suppose.....for whatever reason.....  
101 but then I would also say, hand on heart that girls can get involved in  
102 more verbal misbehaviour, with boys, it's more physical

103 I: But something that struck me that I hadn't intended asking, is do you  
104 think that the gender of the teacher makes a difference. It's just that in  
105 my past teaching career, in one school we used to have boys and girls  
106 in the infant school and then the boys left to go to a boys school after 3  
107 years. Gradually we lost all the boys and one parent remarked that we  
108 weren't 'boy friendly'. I wondered was it because we were all female  
109 teachers. What do you think of that?

110 Pr: Yes, I do think there is something in that but I do think it's about the  
111 quality of the teaching as well and the training of the teachers which is  
112 another area, that needs to be looked at around behaviour because it is  
113 a challenge that will come up for teachers. They tend to come out  
114 academically trained beautifully, but around behaviour management, I  
115 would find that there is a need there, especially younger teachers, I  
116 think, there is a lot of learning.....a huge learning curve there around  
117 behaviour management and I do think there is a gender issue in that I  
118 suppose male....you know, they do need.....there is something they  
119 get from males that we females don't provide and vice versa. And I  
120 think where you have a school, mixed gender I think it is essential to  
121 have some males on the staff.

122 I: Yes....

123 Pr: .....because there is a male psyche that we need to acknowledge and I  
124 think where you have families where children appear.....especially in  
125 Ireland and I suppose it is an international thing, where families have  
126 broken up, the male tends to be the one who leaves the family setting  
127 and I do think the children then miss that male....that focus in their  
128 lives and in school, there may be no male person either. I do think  
129 there is a component there that can affect them.

130 I: Yea, when I was teaching I used to be in an all-girls school and then  
131 the numbers dropped and I went to teach in an all-boys school and the  
132 boys had totally different interests that I had. I was interested in all  
133 girly things. I found that I had to learn so much, I had to learn about  
134 cars, bikes, boats, engines, airplanes.....it was a real learning curve for  
135 me. Have you found that at all?

136 Pr: Yes, and there are some games that boys are naturally drawn to  
137 and you do need to .....to be respected by them because you know to  
138 actually teach them, you do need to earn a certain amount of respect  
139 rather than demand it I think. And I think you know the sort of respect  
140 that you get ....you know from understanding them and where they're  
141 at is a healthier type than the one you might demand.

142 Pr4 I would agree with the statement that there is a difference with regard  
143 to behaviour issues between town and country. Having attended a  
144 school in the country myself and then having done teaching practice in  
145 an urban setting, I definitely would see a difference. There's more  
146 instances of behaviour issues than when I was in Primary school  
147 between the country and town. I think you could put it down to street  
148 wise. In a town, there is so much going on, they're interacting  
149 constantly, the children in an estate, they're grown up more in some

150 levels and I suppose in the country, they're more protected or isolated.  
151 I lived up a country avenue with my sisters and that's where we played  
152 all summer long and there wasn't the same interaction with the outside  
153 world and I suppose when we did go to school, we knew what we had  
154 to do. The difference is that the children are quieter in the country I  
155 would say, quieter in themselves, calm, not as hectic, I suppose more  
156 engaging with the school process as a whole. I know that that's a very  
157 general statement but yes, definitely more engaging. The town  
158 children present different challenges, am.....the teacher is presented  
159 with different or more topics to cope with. It may be something that is  
160 said outside that a child has heard, maybe from an older boy sitting on  
161 a wall. It could be as simple as that, they come in with more, I suppose  
162 more adult information, the teacher has to address that while delivering  
163 the curriculum and you also have the issue with regard to parents, some  
164 parents may have heard of these instances, it definitely presents more  
165 challenges, different challenges.

166 I: And do you agree that boys cause more behaviour problems than girls?  
167 Pr: Yes, I agree with that. There's no question about that. I was taking to  
168 a girl in ----- during the week who is doing some research and she  
169 said its 60/40 percentages, as regards boys presenting with learning  
170 difficulties, behavioural issues, it just seems to be that kind of a divide  
171 and she taught in a special needs school.

172 My query over that is from listening to three male teachers over the  
173 years who have taught in an all-male school, and from one male in  
174 particular, who have drawn up a list on how many of our past pupils  
175 would have gone down the line of jail, drugs, suicide, all of these  
176 things, there is a higher incidence of the males compared to the girls in  
177 a disadvantaged area and then as regards resources, they are divided  
178 out equally, for an all-boys school in a DEIS setting and an all-girls  
179 school in a DEIS setting. When you have that 60/40 divide, there  
180 definitely are more instances of behavioural issues. We have absent  
181 fathers here and we are trying to cope with children who, I won't say  
182 depressed but definitely sad because their fathers are not around. Not  
183 necessarily army fathers, the army have support for that, you know for  
184 spouses who have partners abroad. I'm talking of children who have  
185 never known their father and maybe regard some particular man as  
186 their father and then discover that it's not actually their father. Then  
187 you have other siblings who aren't biological siblings of the same  
188 parents and that in my experience does cause serious issues for  
189 children as regards self-esteem and confidence and being comfortable  
190 in themselves so we have started 'Rainbows', it's a little group set up  
191 for loss and separation. Am...we have targeted at least 20 boys and I  
192 have made phone calls to the mothers in question and said 'you know,  
193 I feel that this is something that Johnny would definitely benefit from,  
194 I've observed him in the class and definitely there's an issue when  
195 family comes up and he's definitely negatively affected by it'. In my  
196 own experience, I have a friend whose boyfriend, at 30 years of age  
197 had not addressed the fact that his father had left him and the  
198 relationship finished. It all stemmed from the fact that he hadn't  
199 addressed that absent father issue at that age and now it all comes back.

200 They were planning a family and he was worried that he wouldn't be  
201 able to carry out his fatherly duties and his father didn't either.  
202 Definitely there's a serious need here and as Principal and looking at  
203 the resources and we are all so conscious that resources are tighter -  
204 thin on the ground now. That divide between girls and boys I think has  
205 to be recognised. There should be more support in a DEIS boys school  
206 than a DEIS girls school because of the 60/40 divide. And I'm  
207 basically quoting my past Principal when he said 'just look at the  
208 graveyard and the prisons, they have come from here, those boys have  
209 come through this school and they have died and we are actually going  
210 to organise a plaque, just in their honour now. These boys had fallen  
211 in with the drugs crowd and ended up, you know, as a mule and  
212 carrying drugs for somebody or took their own life. You know, I  
213 haven't got the exact figure or a number.

214 I: What age would they be?

215 Pr: Very few beyond 30. A few would have been accidents but very few.  
216 They would be in their 20's.

217 I: Where would they have gone on to from here. I mean this is a boys  
218 school to 12 years.

219 Pr: Yes, school completion, the boys would have gone to the Post Primary  
220 up the hill here. I can't say all but some. It's a mixed school. Some  
221 would have gone to Kildare, some go to ----- but the majority  
222 would have gone to the Post Primary up the hill.

223 I: Would the majority of pupils here be from the -----?

224 Pr: Yes, the majority would be but some are coming in. It was interesting  
225 recently, I was asked, as principal, and we are organising our budget  
226 for next year for school completion, to draw up an estimated figure of  
227 need, of children at risk. I spoke with our longest serving member of  
228 staff, the male teacher because he would be aware of the background,  
229 and I said, 'you know, this child is damaged, do you feel that he will  
230 follow in his father's footsteps and his two older brothers going into  
231 the army?' and he said 'yes, from my experience, that would be  
232 predicable, where he would go. And then there are twins in my class  
233 and he said 'no, not one in that family went beyond 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> year so they  
234 won't either. So we're looking at it now and I have a lot of concerns. I  
235 heard a statistic, I can't quote the exact figures but last night I had a  
236 conversation with a friend of mine with regard to this. It's 600,000  
237 predicted unemployed in the next 10 years and that would bring serious  
238 social and economic issues to families and as a result, schools and  
239 services are under pressure to cater for all of these people who don't  
240 have jobs and opportunities so I think there is a desperate need to cater  
241 for the boys now. And I don't know if we look at the teenage girls, the  
242 18 year-old who may have had an early pregnancy, a young mother but  
243 there's great supports there. There is a welfare system and there's a  
244 district nurse and I've observed some of the mothers coming here,  
245 young mothers coming in here with their boys, .....they're coping.  
246 Obviously there are some who don't cope, I mean, don't get me wrong,  
247 but I suppose it's .....am.....it's responsibility, it's a way of life for  
248 them to get up and get their children fed and there's order in their day,  
249 they have a purpose. But for a father who may have just become

involved with this girl for a short time and he leaves and then, this child comes along and the father feels 'Oh my God, I do have responsibility over there and I can't address it for whatever reason. I can't provide, does that mean that I'm going to be the same as my father was'. There's a cycle there, a disturbing cycle. And I spoke to somebody recently about the fact that the issues now at home, I mean even 10 years ago, a broken family did have a father and a mother, I mean ok, this week it's me, next week it's your father. And there's other issues in the house where there's a father, as I said before who is not the biological father and there are extra siblings coming in. I mean, there's a child in my class who really doesn't know where he belongs. We've a child in this school who left at Christmas time to go and live with his father and his new family as in two younger siblings, having left his mother and another sibling who is from a different father, so this child is really in the middle on his own. So he left, he left this school, he left a class of 6 boys, he left his comfort zone. He wanted to live with his father so the mother had to let him go to live with his father for 3 or 4 months but couldn't fit in there. There was an established family unit. There was a mother and a father and two siblings and he was coming along and acting out. So he came back. And I spoke to the previous Principal and I said the child is back and he said he had to go and find out for himself what it was like. I mean it's emotional, it's upsetting. He had to go and find out what it was like to live with his father. His father was working long hours so he spent the day with this other woman, who wasn't his mother. It's .disturbing, so now he lives with his mum and two other siblings. Now there's a new baby in the family and the new baby is a boy and that seems to have focused his attention. He's the older brother now with this child and he's excelling here now and I think it was nice for him to come back to a group of 6 boys who missed him, who genuinely wanted him back and who never asked 'where did you go? Why are you here?'. There was a general acceptance when he came in, sat down in his uniform. I knew he'd come back and I was delighted for him but you worry about him in 10 years-time. You worry about him in years to come when he sees a father attending the graduation of a sibling or a half-sibling. It's sad, I mean even in a separated environment, men should have a contact, you know, a responsibility. Men should be presented with the long term effects of not being on call for a child. And it's always been the case that the mother is left. It's accepted as the case but ...am...you would definitely need heightened awareness. I forget now but I'm going off on a tangent here but it's a gender issue. That is a gender issue and there's no point in fighting that. I mean I read recently in the paper that we are 25 years addressing disadvantage, you wonder about the effects of all this.

I: Are you saying that they still haven't got it right?

Pr: I think the schools have done all that they can in catering for the needs but you have to go back to the roots - to where the needs started from. I mean the School Completion Programme is excellent because it is targeting them now and even today, there's a group gone from the Post Primary school and there's a girl, it just so happens that the

Coordinator for the 7 schools locally - Joe - I think it's taking in Kildare, 1 school in ----- and schools in the ----- Camp, and this is her cluster of schools. She organising the After School Club and she's putting the project workers in there, organising the funding and getting the coach to come in, and she's getting someone to do the cookery, that's going to be on a Tuesday. She's involved in the school, say family fun week in the ----- with the Family Resource Centre. She's constantly consulting the teachers and Principal with regard to project workers and the next child at risk, the next child that has missed days, she says 'let's put him into this lot' and it's great then because I've noticed even with one child, who's working very successfully with the project worker, it's working out very successfully. At first he wasn't very interested at the beginning and we had to overcome that. He came from a very very disorganised background but I met the mum recently and it was very nice to be able to say to her 'well, we will keep this in place and thanks for signing the form because that means that he is getting his half hour per day'. It was nice to be able to relay that information. His teacher is very happy that ....am....he's made this progress. Then of course, we have the whole school. We have the Community Liaison Project as well. A teacher, based in this school is in the role of Coordinator of 3 schools in the ----- So she meets with parents and one of the overall aims of the role is she is not going home with a negative story about attendance but is going home with something positive but I feel that needs to be addressed also. I feel from that my observations after 6 months is that the 2 groups, the School Completion and the Project workers in here, and they are facilitating the child. I think from my observations the home/school project workers see themselves very much involved with the parents but we are talking about the same family and this is where the issues arise because now I'm thinking well, Julie, do you want to maybe talk to the project worker and the teacher and see how well he is doing and actually go home with that information. That's the ideal and that should happen as opposed to the home/school deciding 'well, I only support the parents'. That divide cannot be there when it's the one family, information has to cross, liaising is essential.

I: You mentioned the Coordinator, is she a teacher?

Pr: No, she is not a teacher. She has 15 project workers in different schools and she coordinates everything, including funding. We have a child here with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) and last year, she organised 3 play therapy sessions for him. The idea was that the mum would come in and observe the play sessions between the child and therapist but mum failed to come in each time. We cut the counselling then because other children could avail of this. Now the child is definitely in need but for maximum effect, mum needed to be involved. Again we had a child here who didn't meet the criteria for Reading Recovery because he didn't have the basics of reading but the Coordinator insisted that he be kept on. Reading Recovery is an excellent programme but you have to meet the criteria age wise and ability wise. Recently one of the children here came successfully

through the 20 week programme and he read at his First Communion Mass, and last year, he wouldn't have been able to do that. Now we have Maths Recovery coming on board. One of our teachers has volunteered to do the training. This will mean 1<sup>st</sup> class targeted every single day with a structured maths programme because our results show that Maths, as much as literacy, needs attention. But this teacher has a split Senior Infants and 1<sup>st</sup> class, I have 2<sup>nd</sup> class but I have to facilitate the teacher by taking 12 Senior Infants when she is trying to do the programmes with 1<sup>st</sup> class. I have to do this because it's a waste of resources, money and time, if it is not rolled out effectively.

### **Teachers' Focus-Group**

T6: I suppose boys tend to have a lot of energy that I suppose that you can channel into games and if you did channel it into games, it would certainly work. But that's what they need, I think, they need lots of activities

T2: I also think that it works well, you know with reading and things and if you want them reading, they think aw. but with comics.....they are still reading at the end of the day and you ask 'well, what would you like to read about, I find that that engages them at an academic level. Behaviour wise, girls can be boisterous as well. Boys are very honest with you. They say exactly what the problem is whereas girls can be nasty.

T3: If you correct girls, they look daggers at you.

T1: I think boys tend.....their behaviour is expressed more, and it's more, kind of in a physical way, whereas girls can have very very significant behaviour difficulties and it's kind of very introverted behaviour and it can be very kind of....damaging.....bitching, and it can be a difficult buddying issue in girls....

Teachers together: Yea....

T1: And they can do a lot of harm with it and it kind of goes unnoticed.

I: And what about town and country schools? Is there a difference?

T6: There was a time when there was I suppose, but I don't think it is as marked anymore.

T2: I'd say that is mainly to do with the TV, media and that. I was just saying the other day, it's ridiculous, I'm not a parent at all but you get 7 and 8 year olds watching games that are only allowed for 18 year olds. They are so violent and they've got prostitution things in them. I can't understand what parents would allow their children to do that, just to have an easy life. I think it has a lot to do with behaviour issues because they think that is fact. They're aware of so much more.

T1: Our school would have traditionally been a country school and over the last, say, 8-9 years, it has grown up into a commuter belt so I think that you would get the odd country school, still far out the country who had kind of a native population where you would still get the same families coming through time and time again. We had that as one element of our school but there's a much bigger mix to it now. So I think that has changed – the dynamic around behaviour. But I'm sure there are still country schools where the school is just part of the community and the behaviour issues there would be different. Ours was like that and parents would come in to you and say 'you know, .....they wouldn't

400 be interested in the academic, they would say as long as his behaviour  
401 is good. I'd say there are still schools like that – where the school is  
402 part of the local community only.

403 **Pupils' Focus-Group 1**

404 P3: It really depends on the child. It's not necessarily always the boys. It  
405 could be a boy or a girl at first and then the next child could follow on,  
406 carrying on, that could lead to a boy and a girl causing misbehaviour.

407 P4: On the part where the town schools and the country schools. In the  
408 town schools, there's more criminals and .....

409 I: And you think that might make a difference?

410 P4: Yea.

411 I: In general though. Although, of course, a boy or a girl can cause  
412 problems, would you say, in general, that boys can cause more  
413 behaviour problems than girls or would you say that girls cause more  
414 behaviour problems than boys?

415 Children in Unison: Boys.

416 P3: Definitely boys.

417 I: And is that your experience here in this school?

418 Children in Unison: Yea.

419 P1 Boys talk non-stop. And the girls, well, the girls are quiet even though  
420 some of them is laughing. They don't get in trouble.

421 P3 Most boys in the class talk about a football match, just gone on over the  
422 week-end and all the boys say which player is better than the other and  
423 they argue over football players.

424 P1 Yea, they have a debate across the classroom and to do your work is  
425 very very hard.

426 P5: After playing soccer, they start giving out to another person.

427 I: So this might happen in the classroom, is it?

428 P5: Yea.

429 P6 I think it's mostly boys, because girls keep to themselves and are quiet.

430 I: And the boys make fun, is that what you are saying?

431 P6: No, they just want attention.

432 I: OK

433 P3 Boys tend to act out because they need to prove themselves. Girls don't  
434 need to, they don't need to do a certain thing. Lads, they're  
435 more.....competitive. they take everything seriously.

436 I: Who takes everything seriously?

437 P1 A couple of people in the school, like there will be a certain child nearly  
438 every day and if they do something wrong, they say, ah, sorry, but if he  
439 misses, some will give out.

440 I: Are you talking about boys?

441 P1: Yea, boys, they take everything seriously and if someone says something  
442 hurtful, they can attack back. And if you say something back, they can  
443 bate (beat) you up for it.

444 I; OK

445 P4: Boys are probably aggressive, what they see on TV, what they see on the  
446 streets and that.

447 I: So they look at what they see on TV and act that out.

448 P4: Yea.

449 I: The town and country schools, you were saying that because there are



450 more criminals in towns that there are more problems in schools, is that  
 451 what you were saying earlier?  
 452 P4: Yea, what's going on in the streets or what is going on in TV.  
 453 I: On TV.  
 454 P4: Yea, you never see anything bad going on in the country. They may  
 455 think that's the way they have to act.  
 456 P1: If a pupil moved from a town school, to a country school, they could  
 457 end up spreading bad behaviour or they could calm down. They could  
 458 go either way. they could calm down with the rest of the school or  
 459 they could raise behaviour.  
 460 I; That's something I hadn't thought about. Good.  
 461 I: Now would anything like to say anything else about behaviour or  
 462 behaviour support, anything that we left out?  
 463 P3: Just that respect and consistency is definitely needed in school.

#### 464 **Pupils' Focus-Group 2**

465 P1: I agree about the town and country schools because there is more bad  
 466 stuff happening in estates and everything, people throwing stones at  
 467 windows and everything and then the children come and do that to the  
 468 school.  
 469 I: Ok, and what about the boys causing more behaviour problems than  
 470 girls?  
 471 P4 (b): I'm not just saying this but like girls in our class cause more behaviour  
 472 problems than boys.  
 473 P1 Yea, they are always messing around, like laughin and sniggering  
 474 behind the teacher's back.  
 475 P4: Another teacher always says 'ah the girls' are grand' but sure they are  
 476 always laughin and sniggering when the teacher is not looking and  
 477 always whispering to each other so it's not just the boys.  
 478 P1 In our class, boys are probably..... more misbehaved and say a boy  
 479 does something wrong, well, if say a girl did something wrong, the  
 480 teacher would hardly notice, teacher would hardly give out to them or  
 481 take any notice of it.  
 482 I: Would she see them doing it?  
 483 P1 Yea, and she wouldn't take any notice.  
 484 P3 Yea, that always happens and it's not fair on the boys.  
 485 P1 Say if we threw paper, we would get roared at, and say if they (girl's)  
 486 threw paper, they would be asked to pick it up. That does happen.  
 487 P2 I think it's like a stereotype, it's not always that boys are more  
 488 misbehaved because we have about 21 boys in our class and we only  
 489 have 11 girls so the boys are going to get noticed more than the girls.  
 490 I; Because they are 2/3rds of the class.  
 491 P1 I think like if there's some child that never misbehaves and they do  
 492 something wrong, the teacher says 'ah, that's ok because you're  
 493 normally good' and then they might do it again and the teacher says '  
 494 oh, it's grand because you're normally good'. Then they may get into  
 495 a habit so they should punish them, like they might get into the habit of  
 496 doing things.  
 497 I: So we are coming back to consistency again, the teacher should be  
 498 consistent in what she does.  
 499 Pupils: Yea.

500 P1: there was a rule brought in this year in the school that make-up is  
501 banned but some girls wear make-up and the teacher notices but  
502 nothing is said to them and let's say the boy was wearing combats and  
503 he wore them in, he'd get into trouble.  
504 P1: One of my friends got in trouble and he's in trouble on and off, and a  
505 teacher or two asks him when he's going to be off yard again, taking  
506 the mick out of him.  
507 I: And off yard means he's not allowed play in the yard, is it?  
508 Pupils: Yea.  
509 P2 And like, he used be bold, the teachers still tease him over it.  
510 P5 they still think he's like that and he's trying to change.  
511 I: ah.  
512 Silence  
513 I: Anyone like to add anything more to that?  
514 P1: Like the language of our teacher is sometimes pretty disgraceful, like  
515 she says 'taking the mick' and 'the piss' and I was saying it to my mam  
516 and my mam was saying it to the other parents that like her language  
517 was disgraceful and nothing was done about it really.  
518 .  
519 I: Thank you very much for helping and giving up your time, it is much  
520 appreciated

